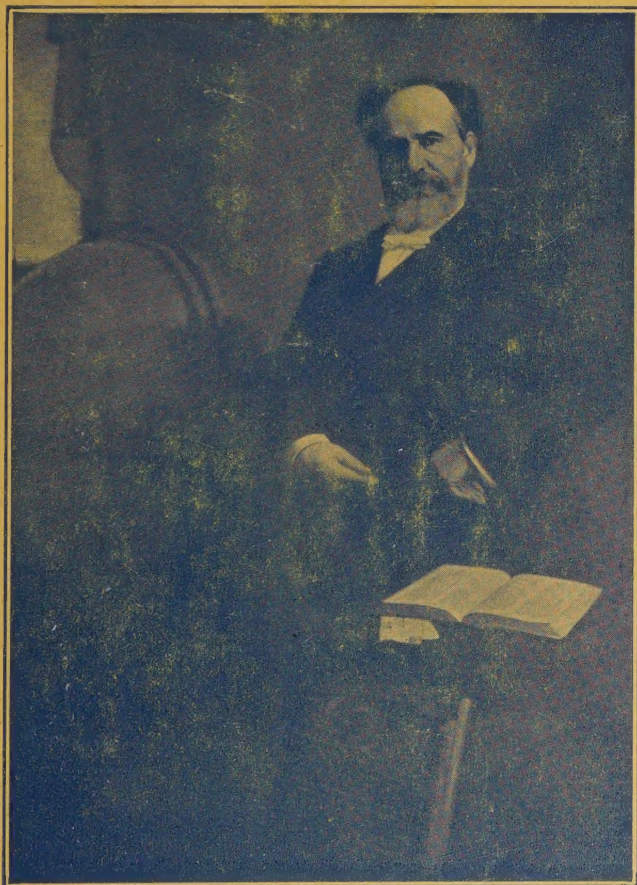


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"CHRIST IN THE BIBLE" SERIES

By A. B. SIMPSON

Founder of The Christian and Missionary Alliance



CHRIST IN THE BIBLE

By

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VOLUME V

THE TIMES OF DAVID AND
SOLOMON

INCLUDING PARTS OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL,
KINGS AND CHRONICLES

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INTRODUCTION

The eye of spiritual discernment loves to trace in the story of the Old Testament the type and foreshadowing of the New. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt's bondage looked forward to the grander story of human Redemption. The victories of Joshua prefigured the Apostolic age and the early triumphs of Christianity. The dreadful declension under the Judges foreshadowed the Dark Ages of Christian history. The Reformation under Samuel pointed toward the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. The reign of Saul was the counterfeit of the true kingdom; and so there is a worldly Church and even a false ecclesiasticism before the manifestation of Christ and the revelation of the Bride of the Lamb. At last David comes, God's true king. And the story of his rejection, exile, and final triumph vividly foreshadows the conflicts and victories that are to usher in the reign of our Lord, and "make Jesus King." Finally the reign of Solomon, in all his glory, sets forth the great consummation, the millennial age,

and the glorious reign of the King of kings, and Lord of lords. This is the lofty theme which the following chapters and discourses attempt to trace. May they prove, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, a divine incentive to make us "of one heart to make Jesus King."

DAVID, THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

"I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, which shall fulfil all My will" (Acts xiii, 22).

DAVID is the antithesis of Saul, and as the latter foreshadowed the counterfeit kingdom which Satan is trying to palm off on the world, so David represents the true kingdom and the true spirit of His kingdom. Let us look for the present at David's call and consecration to his high office as God's anointed.

I. In I. Samuel xiii. 14 the prophet is represented as saying to Saul, "The Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded Him to be captain over His people." God was seeking a true man to represent Him in the government of His people. It is peculiar to notice how this language is used by the prophet of Judah's declining kingdom, "I sought for a man among all their tribes and found none." God is represented as seeking for a man who can under-

stand His thoughts and represent His will. Even David afterwards failed to meet His expectation, and it was not until the Lord Jesus at length stood on Jordan's banks, the first spotless man since Adam failed, that God at length could say, "Behold My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

GOD'S MAN.

Saul had utterly failed and God was seeking for a man to take his place. But a little later the language changes and He exclaims, "I have found David, My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him" (Ps. lxxxix. 20). God has discovered a true man, or, as the inspired Scripture expresses it, "a man after My own heart who shall fulfil all My will." What God wanted was a man after His heart. Saul was a man after his own heart and after the world's heart. He represented man's ideals of manhood and he aimed to gratify his own ambitions and work out his own plans. God, the true theocratic King of Israel, wanted a man that would simply represent Him, that would catch His thought and reproduce it and work it out in his life. The same testimony is borne to David elsewhere, when it is said, "David served his own generation by the will of God."

The aim of David's life was to do the will of God.

But there is a third passage in this chain of references which completes the story of David's call. It is I. Samuel xvi. 1, "Fill thine horn with oil and go. I will send thee to Jesse, the Bethlehemite; for I have provided Me a king among his sons." God had been seeking a man and He had found him at last, and here the secret is told: "I have provided Me a king." The reason he met God's expectations was because God had provided him. The people provided Saul. He was their choice; but God provided David contrary to the expectations of man and all outward appearances or probabilities. God never will find things that will satisfy Him until He first provides them. The secret of pleasing God is to possess God, and let Him possess you; for He gives what He commands and enables for that which He requires.

THE CONTRAST.

As we look at these two men—Saul and David—it is not strange if we should be sometimes perplexed in reference to God's strong preference of the one and unqualified rejection of the other, for there was much in Saul to commend, and there was much in David to

condemn. Saul was naturally noble, generous and brave. The very act of the character of Jonathan, his son, implies that there must have been something naturally good in the character of his father, so far as any fallen man can have any good in him. Then the early life of Saul has many attractive features. He seems to have been a dutiful son, seeking industriously for his father's lost asses, and when he failed to find them he quickly responds to the suggestion to go to the prophet and ask counsel of God.

There were some elements of piety apparent in his conduct; and when Samuel gave him his extraordinary commission, he behaved himself with singular propriety. He kept his secret well. He opened his heart to receive the Holy Spirit, who came upon him in a peculiar power. He joined a band of prophets and sang and ministered like them. If we except excessive humility in connection with his inauguration—in his hiding among the stuff—he seemed unobtrusive and becoming in his deportment.

His first exploits as commander and king of Israel's hosts were marked, and still later in his life his attachment to David breaks out in the midst of his wild and passionate vindictiveness, and he breaks down and cries like a

baby when he discovers the generosity of the man whose life he had been seeking.

Then, on the other hand, David had most glaring faults, notwithstanding all the beautiful traits of his personal character and his deep and genuine piety.

God's Word does not excuse the unbridled lust and the cool deliberate cruelty with which he could, as Nathan expresses it, snatch the one ewe lamb from the bosom of his faithful servant and soldier, Uriah, and then calmly and cunningly send that brave and loyal man, in the very ardor of his devotion to his king, right into the jaws of death, on purpose to get rid of his interference with his royal master's shameful selfishness. The worst of all is the torpor and paralysis of David's conscience, which for two whole years was utterly insensible to the double-dyed crime until God's strong reproof and chastening at length brought him to his senses, and struck a flash of light into his deadened moral sensibilities. God's faithful Word always tells the worst about the subjects of His grace. How then can we explain this strong language of preference in which God speaks of David and the unequivocal censure which condemned and rejected Saul?

SELF-WILL AND GOD'S WILL.

1. Saul represented self-will; David represents God's will. Saul's great object was to carry out his own ambition. David's chief desire was to understand and accomplish the divine purpose concerning him. When he erred he did it blindly, but the moment he recognized and realized his disobedience, he broke down like a penitent child. There was no self-will, no obstinacy, no rebellion in his spirit. There was error, terrible error. There was impulse, there was earthly passion; but his will was true to God when he really understood the will of God.

THE NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL MAN.

2. Saul represented the natural man, and David the spiritual man. Saul was the embodiment of what was best in human nature. All that David had that was commendable was due to the grace of God, and speaking of his own life afterwards he could say with the deepest humility: "Who am I, and what is my people? for all things are given of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee."

David was a monument of divine grace. Saul was the embodiment of human nature, self, selfishness and pride. God hates our pride and wants our weakness, self-renunciation, noth-

ingness and dependence. David had learned the lesson of divine grace, and therefore God allowed him to be one of the princes in that kingdom of grace where our highest hope is the mercy of our God.

This is the kingdom to which we belong, and its watchword forever shall be, "Not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy Name be the glory." It was because David had learned this watchword that God could choose him and use him notwithstanding even his gravest faults.

SORROW HARDENING OR SANCTIFYING.

3. The sorrows and sins of Saul drove him further from God, while David's brought him nearer. This is one of the most certain tests of our spiritual condition; How are we affected by our trials? Do they discourage us, or do they drive us to the bosom of our heavenly Friend? Still more searching is the question, How are we affected by our faults, our failures and our sins, when we discover them? Do we try to cover them, to excuse them, or, failing in this, do we give up in discouragement and despair, and say, "There is no use trying; everything is against me"? Poor Saul went from bad to worse, and at last turned from God and sought counsel from Satan when the heavenly Source on which he had depended failed him

at last. His trust never was quite true, or he would have clung to it most closely in the hour of darkness and seeming despair. David came out of his worse faults a better man, and God could teach him, even by his temptations and sins, to die to self and rise to loftier heights of the grace of God.

THE FIFTY-FIRST PSALM.

There is nothing more perfectly instructive and more supremely strong than the trial of David's heart unfolded to us in the 51st Psalm, which gives us the inner history of his soul after his greatest sin. There is no notion of trifling, there is no excuse or palliation of anything. He paints his crime in the darkest colors. He talks of blood guiltiness. No, he goes deeper than his crime, to his own personal character, and he says, "I was shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin." He sees nothing good in himself. Every prop is gone, every hope is gone, as far as the human is concerned. After a life of blessed communion with God he stands self-convicted of inexcusable weakness and total depravity. Could a human soul ever be placed in a more terrible situation? But for the grace of God it would drive any man to despair and self-destruction.

But we see this man looking straight up into

the clear blue sky of heaven and claiming with unshaken confidence the infinite mercy of his God, and the higher spiritual blessing that he had not before. "Wash me," he cries, "and I shall be whiter than snow." According to the days wherein he has seen evil so he dares to claim that God will bless him with the days of heaven. His profound penitence is only surpassed by his boundless faith. He sinks to the uttermost depths, and then he rises to the very heights of heavenly grace. This was, doubtless, the crisis of David's life, and out of this he came, not only a saved, but a sanctified man, crucified to self and to sin, and knowing, even as we know, in some measure at least, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

DAVID AND PETER.

One cannot help being reminded of the parallel between this Old Testament story and the New Testament picture of Judas and Peter. Like poor Saul, Judas was driven by his sin to desperation and suicide. Like David, Peter sinned as deeply, but he received the unspeakable grace of repentance, and there was something in his heart which led him in his darkest sorrow to the mercy of Jesus. Judas "went out and hanged himself." Peter "went out and wept bitterly," and when Jesus was risen

from the dead and stood at length upon the Galilean shore, Peter did not slink away from His presence abashed and guilty, but he leaped into the sea and was the first to swim ashore, and there he is at the blessed feet of Him whom he had once dishonored. God give us all the spirit of grace, which even in our darkest sorrows and deepest sins will turn heavenward for mercy that will pardon, and grace that waits to help in time of need.

DAVID'S ANOINTING.

II. David's anointing to his high calling. God has called His servant, now He sets him apart. Let us notice

THE DEATH OF SELF.

I. David's anointing immediately followed after the death of Agag. It is not until self dies that Christ can be enthroned as King in our hearts and lives. David cannot come in till Agag goes.

GOD'S THOUGHTS NOT AS OURS.

2. David's anointing as the choice of God among all his brethren was contrary to every human appearance and expectation. Even Samuel expected that one of the other sons would have been chosen, but neither Abinadab's

appearance, nor Shammah's attractive person could meet the divine conditions, and they were all passed by until the whole seven had been rejected, and they had to send for the youngest born, the lad of the family, whose extreme youth had made him kind of errand boy for all the rest and left him entirely out of sight on this occasion.

It was not accidental that David was the eighth of Jesse's sons, for the numbers seven and eight are especially significant and symbolical in the Scriptures. Seven represents the perfection of the old dispensation and the natural creation. It is the first week. Eight is the first day of the second seven, and thus it represents the new creation and divine order. Therefore, circumcision was on the eighth day representing the death of the old life and the beginning of a new life. Therefore was Christ's resurrection on the first day, which is also the eighth day, the beginning of the second week. The seven sons of Jesse represent the perfection and the completeness of the earthly, and David, the eighth, represents the new generation and the new dispensation, the supernatural and the divine. It is not based on the conditions and qualifications which appear in the natural, therefore the stronger, the wiser, and the attractive, are passed by, and lit-

tle David is chosen, instead of Eliab and Shammah; because "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the strong; and the foolish things to confound the wise; and things which are not to bring to naught the things which are; that no flesh should glory in His presence."

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

3. David's anointing was more than an outward symbol. It was accompanied by a special impartation of the Holy Spirit, who came upon him from that day forward and enabled him for all his trials, duties and difficulties. David's life henceforth was supernatural and divine. The Holy Ghost was his counsellor and his strength, empowering his arm for battle and instructing his brain for the demonstration of his great trust, and the vessel of the Holy Ghost and the instrument of the power of God. In like manner the Holy Spirit is our divine endowment for every need of our Christian life and work, and the direct source of complete supply and the equipment for every situation in which God can place us. He will give us wisdom and counsel. He will give us courage and faith. He will give us patience and love. He will work for us in the providences and circumstances of life. He will influence for us hands and hearts of men, and

He will carry through our plans and purposes which are according to the will of God to success and blessing; and it is our privilege to count upon Him for all needed supplies, for every trust that is committed to our hands.

THE DIVINE SEAL.

4. The supernatural anointing and enabling for this great trust is confirmed by God's manifest seal upon his life, that all men were made to know by his actual life and character that he was God's chosen and anointed one. God not only calls us, but He puts His credentials upon us and forces men to see that we are His chosen servants and representatives. And so we read in I. Samuel, chapters xvi. and xviii. this extraordinary testimony that one of Saul's servants brought to the palace of the king, "Behold, I have seen David, the son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in prayer, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with Him." What a testimony! Personally attractive, wise, judicious, with cultivated tastes, and a brave, valiant soldier; and, above all, a man of God. Beloved, God wants the world to see this in us also and to bear witness to it so manifestly that we shall not need letters of commendation, but our lives

shall be "living epistles known and read of all men."

First, God opened the way for his going to the court of Saul in the most natural and providential manner, as his companion and armor bearer, to cheer his nervous and distracted moments by his wonderful harp and gift of song, and to become acquainted with the life of the court which he was afterwards to fill so prominently. And so God will open our way if we are God's men. No combination of circumstances can shut you out. If you are right with heaven every circumstance and providence will conspire to bring you the occupation, the opening, the work, the friends, for which you and God have need. You do not need to plead the wiles of human diplomacy and selfish influence to ingratiate yourself. David was not seeking the kingdom, the kingdom was seeking him. Beloved, wherever God has a David, a Daniel or a Joseph, He has a place prepared for him, and all the powers of earth and hell shall be unable to keep him out of it.

THE TEST.

5. It was necessary once more that David should be proved; and so the situation came at last. The mighty Goliath had defied the armies of Israel and the God of heaven for

days together, and no man had dared to answer his challenge. But one day David came to the camp to visit his brethren, and as he heard his defiant boast he modestly and simply answered, "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Thy servant will go and fight this Philistine." It did not even occur to him that he was doing anything unusual. It was so natural for him to be noble that he was unconscious of his own nobility. We need not dwell upon the stirring scene, the unobtrusive modesty and the fearless trust of the brave young warrior and the utter simplicity with which he committed the whole issue to the God of heaven,—how could his trust be disappointed?

There was but a minute of suspense, as the giant stalked forth in his defiant pride, and the shepherd lad with his loaded sling ran down the valley to meet his foe, and hurling that stone with heaven-directed aim, saw the giant fall, his skull crushed in, and his life crushed out, while all the Philistine hosts were flying in dismay, and Israel knew that God's choice was vindicated before earth and heaven.

The ordination that every true worker must have is not the placing of human hands upon our heads, but the living power of the living God, and the actual works of Christ wrought out in our lives. These are the cre-

dentials that man can understand and that no criticism can silence or neutralize. Oh, may the Holy Spirit thus choose, thus call, thus qualify, and thus seal our life and ministry.

THE TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS OF DAVID'S FAITH

"I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps. xxvii. 13).

"But the God of grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I. Peter v, 10).

THESE two passages express the supreme lesson of the nine years of David's life that immediately followed his anointing as God's appointed king. It is the law of faith for God to give us the promise of blessing, and then put us to the test to see if we will hold our faith and prove worthy of our high calling. No life has ever been more severely tested than David's, and everything in his life, the record of his personal trials and triumphs is given in such fulness of detail that we can walk by his side as we read the story; and we can even feel the beatings of his inmost heart as we follow the wondrous psalms, in which he has given us the deeper portrait of his inmost heart and his spiritual experience.

I. His Trials:

BITTERLY HATED.

1. The first of these was Saul's jealous hate. The favor with which he met him at first and welcomed him to his palace and his court as his trusted minstrel and honored armor-bearer, and even as the captain of his guard, was soon turned into mistrust and jealousy as he saw that he had already won the hearts of the people, and he began to feel that David was the dreaded rival of whom Samuel had already given him a solemn intimation. The first open outbreak occurred when the maidens of Israel shouted the praises of Saul and David, and ascribed to Saul his thousands, and to David his ten thousands, of trophies of victory. Saul "eyed" David, we are told, from that day forward and was very wroth. There is nothing more painful than to be the victim of keen-eyed jealousy, which watches all our movements and imputes wrong to the most innocent action. It injects a sting into every pleasure, and destroys the frankness and confidence of every friendship.

DECEIVED.

2. Next, we find Saul intriguing for the destruction of David, and using even the affection of Michal, his own daughter, who loved

the noble young Bethlehemite, and whose love her father played with, that he might inveigle David into a fatal snare and sacrifice his life while nobly striving to win the two hundred Philistine lives whom Saul demanded as the dowry of David's chosen bride. But God carried him safely through, and Saul had the mortification of having to give his daughter to the man he hated and place him in the powerful position of the king's son-in-law.

ATTACKED.

3. Next, we find Saul cherishing no longer a mere sentiment of jealousy, but a deep, determined purpose of destruction. Twice he hurled the javelin at David's breast as he played in his presence, and when he was forced to fly he sent his officers to pursue him to his own home, where he was saved only by the strategy of his loving wife, who let him down through a window that he might fly from his pursuers.

PURSUED.

4. Next, Saul pursued him even to Ramah, whither he fled to the protection of Samuel the prophet; but as Saul and his soldiers came to the prophet's precinct, lo, the old spirit of inspiration came upon him and his soldiers,

and they were compelled to prophesy like the rest, and returned baffled by the interposition of God. But it now became but too evident that Saul's purpose was unchanged, and that Samuel's protection could not save David from his murderous hands.

INNOCENT BLOOD.

5. Next, he fled to Nob, the priestly city, where Abimelech, the high priest, and the priestly colony dwelt, and there he obtained refreshment and also the direction of God through the priestly ephod, and took away with him the sword of Goliath. But, alas! he had soon the deep sorrow, far more distressing to him than his own danger, of learning that for this kind and hospitable act Abimelech and the whole priestly family had been cruelly slain by the order of Saul, through the mean and treacherous tale-bearing of Doeg, the Edomite, who had been the witness of Abimelech's kindness and had quickly gone to Saul to tell the tale.

It was in vain that Abimelech pleaded that he only meant to honor Saul in honoring his son-in-law and knew nothing of the trouble between them. His life was ruthlessly torn from him, and when even Saul's soldiers refused to touch the Lord's anointed priest the low and

despicable Doeg was only too glad to do the work, and with his own hand he slew in cold blood eighty-five of the priests of the Lord. And not only so, but the very city of Nob was razed to the ground and every living creature in it was ruthlessly murdered. David learned from Abiathar, the only survivor of this tragedy, the fearful story, and his heart must have been crushed with the deepest of all griefs—that of being the innocent occasion of bringing ruin upon others because of their attachment to him.

6. The next great sorrow that came to David was the loss of his own dearest friends. Michal, his wife, was cruelly taken from him, and given to a neighboring chief with the hope that he would become the murderer of David through jealous rivalry. Jonathan, his dearest friend, became separated from him, and after one more parting they never met again. Samuel, his aged and venerated father in the Lord, was separated from him for the remainder of his life, and when the old prophet died and was buried with high honor in Israel, David was not permitted to stand by his bier or pay the last tribute of affection to the man who would have appreciated his presence more than all the others. Even his own father and mother became separated from him, for with loving con-

sideration for their safety he early took measures to remove them from Bethlehem, where they were sure to be the objects of Saul's unkindness, and to send them away over to the land of Moab, to a remote kinsman of his, through Ruth, his ancestress, until his own plans should be settled. Henceforth he was alone and friendless, a fugitive among the mountains, and with no friend to comfort him but God alone.

AMONG STRANGERS.

7. Next, he fled to Achish, the king of Gath. Here he found himself in even greater danger, for Achish and the Philistines remembered but too well his victory over Goliath, their champion, and he had to find means to escape with his life from the Philistine court. It must have been a peculiar trial to the simple, frank nature of David to have to resort to artifice for self-protection.

A FUGITIVE.

8. His next refuge was the cave of Adullam in one of the valleys of southern Judea, and there his camp became the resort of all the outlaws, criminals and discontented persons in the land, who fled to his standard because of a certain community of distress and helplessness. So the man who had been accustomed to

the sweetest of associations and the most congenial friendships found himself the chief of a band of freebooters, a sort of Rob Roy, at the head of a lot of vagabonds whom he had to accept as his comrades and friends.

Oh, ye who complain of uncongenial associations, learn a lesson from the life of David. He did not complain of his associates, but he set himself to lift them up to his own level, and before he got through every man of them was a nobleman, and they were trained to be the future princes of Israel. This is what Christ did when He came down from heaven to be the companion of rude and ignorant men of earth. This is the honor of the missionary who goes among the heathen, and, overlooking all their degradation and misery, finds it his chief honor and glory to lift them up to the loftiest and noblest lives, and, like Christ, who has thus lifted us, found his joy in realizing the glorious transformation. If God has associated you with those who are beneath you, why, lift them, inspire them, and let the wilderness and the solitary place of your life rejoice and blossom as the rose.

TREACHERY.

9. Next, he had the bitterness of treachery. While a fugitive in the mountains he found

that the Philistines had invaded the land and attacked the city of Keilah, and he personally marched to its rescue and saved it from its enemies; but, in turn, instead of gratefully remembering his kindness, the men of Keilah plotted to betray him into the hands of Saul, and, but for God's forewarning through the oracle of the priest, he would have perished through this cruel conspiracy. There are few trials harder than to have our kindness met by base ingratitude, and to have those we have befriended and even saved become our cruelest foes. Was there any cup of sorrow that David did not drink?

HUNTED.

10. Next, we find him pursued by Saul even into the wilderness with a troop of three thousand soldiers, until he had to fly from place to place and find new refuges among the barren mountains and the precipitous fields of Maon, Engedi and the desolate region around the Dead Sea. But all through this God protected him, and enabled him on two occasions to have the opportunity of taking the life of Saul had he so wished, and of proving his magnanimity in the very sight of the king. Day by day for weeks and months he was hunted like a partridge in the mountains, his life was continually in his hand, and the strong language of

many of the psalms can only be understood as we realize his imminent and instant peril and his marvelous escapes from destruction. Are you in a position of danger? Is your life assailed? Are you surrounded by enemies on every side? The God of David still lives to deliver those who trust Him and sends His angels to encamp around their dwelling.

NABAL THE CHURL.

II. One of the meanest trials of his wilderness life was the churlish and niggardly shepherd of Carmel, who, after David had protected his herdsmen and his flocks for several months in the mountains, turned back his messengers with coarse insult and sent to David the rude taunt that he was probably a runaway slave from his master, and why should he give him his flesh or his bread. For once David was provoked to wreak sudden vengeance on this miserable cur, and was saved from the crime by the tact of Abigail, Nabal's beautiful wife. There are times when the bite of a mosquito is more trying than the roaring of a lion. There are little imps in life that worry us more than the larger foes that assail us, and we need more grace to keep our sweetness amid the thousand petty and harassing worries than in the roar of the torrent and the

crash of the tempest. David knew this, and Christ knew it well. The last and bitterest trials of the cross were the taunts and the jeers and insults of the crowd whom He could have withered by a glance had He allowed Himself for a moment to lose the victory of His love.

AN EXILE.

12. The crowning trial came at last when, in a moment of utter discouragement, he said, "I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul, and there is nothing better than that I should go into the land of the Philistines," and so, in an hour of unbelief, he left the land where God had told him to stay, and went down and accepted a home at Ziklag, which he made his headquarters for nearly a year and a half. Thence he went out on marauding expeditions against the Philistines, carefully concealing his movements lest they should drive him from the country, working all the while with loyalty toward his own land.

DISASTER.

But at last the crowning disaster came, and he returned one day with his soldiers to find Ziklag a heap of smouldering ashes and all their wives and property carried away by a horde of Amalekites. For a while they could

only lift up their voices and weep, and we are told that they wept until they had no more power to weep. It was an hour of hopeless despair, and at last David's very companions turned upon him, and even threatened to stone him as the occasion of all their sorrow. But just then shines out the triumph of his faith, and it is added: "But David encouraged himself in the Lord, his God." Quickly he sent for Abiathar, the priest, and asked counsel of God, and by divine direction he pursued and overtook them. Striking them with sudden surprise, David scattered them and recovered all the spoil, their wives and children and their property unharmed. Indeed, so vast was the booty that he was able to send a portion of the spoil to all his friends in Judah as a kind of foretaste of the kingdom which he was soon to bring them.

Such were some of the tests and trials of David's early life. God gave him the promise of the kingdom, and then He put him to the test for nine bitter years until he was disciplined and trained for his high calling.

II. Notice the spirit in which he endured these trials:

PRUDENCE.

I. It was the spirit of prudence. He was not reckless and he did not bring needless trials

upon himself, as we so often do. Many of our afflictions are simply the results of our imprudence or foolishness; but we are told expressly that "David behaved himself wisely," and gave no occasion to his enemies to reproach him or to take advantage of him. It is a great thing in the hour of sorrow to maintain a good conscience, and, looking up into the face of God and man, to be able to say, "I know nothing against myself."

SWEETNESS.

2. He kept his sweetness and his love through all the bitter provocation. Again and again the enemy tried to make him meet hate with hate and wrong with wrong, but he triumphed in the end in the spirit of generosity and love, and in spite of the injustice of Saul he made even that wicked man acknowledge his own righteousness and magnanimity when he might have taken his life, and nobly spared him notwithstanding the demands of his own soldiers that he should slay him when God gave him the opportunity. Next to a good conscience is a sweet spirit in standing through tests and trials. Love can endure all things, but even faith will break down if we lose our gentleness and become irritable and vindictive.

FAITH.

3. He overcame by faith. It was this that Satan assailed as he ever does. It is the trial of our faith which is much more precious than gold that perisheth. It is thus that he assailed the Master in the wilderness. God had told Jesus that He was His beloved Son, and then suddenly He plunged Him into circumstances of deepest distress, and Satan pointed to the barren desert and the naked rocks and Christ's own physical hunger, and he whispered with a horrid sneer, "If Thou be the Son of God." But Christ believed in His Father's love and waited for His Father's deliverance. And so He comes to us and points to our distress, tries to make us doubt our promise; but let us never let go our confidence, but hold it fast, for it hath great recompense of reward. God is just waiting to see if we will trust Him to the end.

JOYFULNESS.

4. David not only believed, but he rejoiced. More even than faith and the very blossom and fruit of faith is the spirit of joy and praise. All through those days of darkness David kept his joy and his song. He not only trusted but he rejoiced. He not only stood, but he stood singing, triumphing and rejoicing, and out of

these dark hours have come to us the sweetest of his psalms and the noblest notes of victorious praise that are found in this wonderful Psalter with its unequalled notes of joy and triumph.

PSALMS OF LIFE.

Space will not permit us to go over all the psalms which are described with some prefix connecting them with these days. There is the fifty-ninth, written when they were watching his house to slay him. There is the eleventh, sung when he was like a bird driven to its mountain and hunted as a partridge among the hills. There is the fifty-seventh, composed when he was in the cave; and the fifty-second, when he heard of Doeg's despicable crime against the priests of Nob; and the fifty-fourth, when the Zithites are treacherously trying to sell his life to Saul. But out of them all there are no grander songs than four that we will specially name:

One of these is the twenty-seventh, a psalm of triumph, which was written just after he parted from his father and mother in the land of Moab, and was left alone in the desert. Oh, what a new meaning it gives to the words literally translated, "Though my father and mother have left me, yet the Lord will take me up." Oh, what a lofty elevation it adds to the

shout, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

The next of these psalms of praise is the thirty-fourth, perhaps the richest of all the psalms of David in the spirit of triumphant praise. But we may have often failed to notice that this psalm was written when David was driven from the presence of Achish, the king of Gath, and was supposed to be out of his mind. People still think us out of our mind when we use his language, but he was anything but crazy when, amid his desolation and helplessness, he could look up and say, "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all." And thus looking over all his foes, he could add, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

There is another of these memorial psalms, written just after God had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. It is, perhaps, the most elegant in imagery of all his compositions. How vividly he speaks of his sor-

rows: "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me." How sublimely he describes the interposition of God for his deliverance (Ps. xviii. 6-10, 16-19). How eloquently he describes the glory of his divine Friend (verses 29-35). How tenderly, as a soft undertone, there sings through all the magnificent oratorio of his praise that little soft, sweet chord that tells at once the story of David and of God, "Thy gentleness hath made me great."

There is yet one more psalm which, while written later in David's life, doubtless refers all through to the story of David and of Saul. It is the thirty-seventh Psalm. Back of these wonderful beatitudes there are two figures that we can clearly trace. One of them is the man of hate who seeks to slay the righteous. The other is the man of meekness who frets not because of evil doers, who trusts in the Lord, who commits his way unto the Lord, who rests in the Lord and waits patiently for Him, and the culmination is, "I saw the wicked in great power spreading himself like a green bay tree, yet he passed away, and, lo! he was not. Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." That is Saul. And then, "Mark the perfect

man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." "The meek shall inherit the earth," the meek "shall delight themselves in abundance of peace."

Truly out of David's sorrows came David's songs. What is God getting out of our trials? What are we getting out of them? Are we meeting them with wisdom, with love, with faith and with praise? After three thousand years are we yet so far behind the man who not only sang, but who lived the song of faith and praise in life's darkest hour? Do we wonder that he was "a man after God's own heart"? God help us to be more like him, too!

MAKING JESUS KING

"Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom which My Father has appointed unto Me" (Luke xxii. 28, 29).

"David therefore departed thence and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men" (I. Sam. xxii. 1, 2).

"All these were of one heart to make David king" (I. Chron. xii. 38)

WE have looked at David as a fugitive. We are now to behold him crowned a king. Nine years of bitter persecution are exchanged for forty years of glorious triumph. In his kingdom we behold a type of the kingdom of his greater Son and the crowning of Jesus Christ as earth's millennial Sovereign; and in the loyal fellow-sufferers and soldiers who so nobly fought to win for David the high crown of Israel, we behold the picture of

men and women that God is summoning today to follow our rejected and crucified Master without the camp, in reproach and suffering, to win for Him the crown of all the world and then to sit down with Him on His throne even as He has sat down with His Father upon His throne.

It is said of the proud Napoleon that he refused to be crowned by human hands, but with his own arrogant fingers he placed upon his brow the crown of what he designed as the world's last empire, and stood before the world a self-made monarch. Our blessed Lord and Saviour, while He might well conquer His own kingdom without the help of any of His followers, chooses to take it from our loving hands and to permit us to share with Him at once His sufferings and His glory.

THREE STAGES.

In the followers of David and in the successive stages of his triumph and coronation we see the most vivid foreshadowings of the age to come, and upon which we are about to enter. There were three stages in David's kingdom.

THE WILDERNESS.

The first was his trial, when he was a fugitive from Saul, and his court was the cave of

Adullam, and his followers the outcasts of Israel. In like manner our blessed Lord is also as yet a King without His crown, still driven without the camp, rejected by the world and followed by a faithful few to whom He is still saying, "Ye are they that have continued with Me in My temptations."

CROWNED AT HEBRON.

The second stage of David's kingdom was his coronation at Hebron, where for seven and a half years he reigned over the tribe of Judah alone, while Abner maintained for Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, at Mahanaim, a temporary crown and kingdom over the other tribes of Israel. So, in like manner, our Lord Jesus Christ is to have at His coming the first fruits of the Gospel, the called-out ones of the first resurrection, and He shall form with them the government and the rulers of the millennial age; for God is not now calling to Himself the subjects of His future kingdom, but He is calling out its rulers, and preparing the men and women who are to form His cabinet and sit with Him on His throne in the age to come.

THE THRONE OF ISRAEL.

There was a third stage in the kingdom of David when, more than seven years later, he

became the king of Israel, and the whole land recognized its sovereign and his scepter extended over the surrounding nations until he was the ruler of an important and more mighty kingdom than any of his time, reaching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates, and from the Persian Gulf to Damascus and Lebanon. And so there will be a heavenly stage in the kingdom of Christ when, in the millennial years, He shall reign from sea to sea, and all the nations shall be subject to Him, and earth's millions shall, without exception, own His peaceful sway.

Now we are called to take part in the first two stages, to be true to Him in His exile, and to reign with Him in His first coming, and then to sit at His side and rule over the universal empire which He is then to bring.

Let us look at the men that helped to make David king, and let us emulate them and be "of one heart to make Jesus King."

SINFUL MEN.

I. They were sinful men; they were outcast men; they were men without a character or a reputation; they were men in debt and deep discredit; men under a cloud and without a hope, whom the instinct of a common sorrow drove to David's side in the caves and moun-

tains of Judah; and he accepted them, not because they were bad men, but because they were true to him, and he trained them and lifted them up to his own level and afterwards made them his princes and commanders in the kingdom of Judah and Israel. And so our leader and Lord is calling to His side and choosing for His kingdom not the mighty and the noble of the earth nor always the good, but He hath chosen the "weak things" and the "foolish things, and the things that are despised," and "the things that are not." Yes, He has even chosen the most worthless, hopeless and sinful of our race to be the special objects of His mercy and the prized jewels of His crown.

It is the noblest nature that Satan seeks to devour and destroy. When a man is at his worst you may be sure that he might have been at his best under different influences. God takes such men and turns them back to their true center and there is power in the blood of Christ and in the Spirit of God not only to blot out the past but transform the character, and out of the thistle and the thorn to create the fir tree and the myrtle for the Paradise of God. Don't let your sinfulness keep you back. Don't let your misery discourage you. Don't let your failure crush you. Others have failed

you. You have failed yourself. Hope is gone. All is lost. There is One that will receive you still. One drop of His blood will make you pure. One touch of His hand will make you noble and in one moment you may pass from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son and the aristocracy of the new Jerusalem.

TRUE MEN.

II. They were true men. The one redeeming quality of their lives was that they loved David and were loyal to him. When they first came to him David had good cause to suspect their motives, and he frankly looked them in the face, and said: "If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you; but if ye be come to betray me to my enemies, seeing there is not wrong in my hands, the God of my fathers look upon it and rebuke it." Then came the frank reply, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse; peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee." No matter how lost a man may be there is one thing that may always become a link of hope and a bond of contact with God, and that is, the simple, single, rare and indispensable quality of true sincerity. If the worst

of men can look up into your face with an honest look and an earnest heart and say, "God knows, and you know that I mean to be true," there is hope, there is salvation for him, and all the resources of God's grace and strength are on his side. But a traitor, a double-hearted man, a man with a reservation, a man, who, back of all his pretences and services, is seeking his own interest and ready to barter all else for it in the supreme moment, that man is base to the core, a man of whom we may well be afraid in every true work. He is bound to betray himself at last. He is the most unfortunate creature on earth. The very object which he is seeking will yet fail him, and detected of all men, rejected of God and execrated by himself, he will go down to the damnation of a hypocrite and a traitor.

BRAVE MEN.

III. These men were brave as well as true. They were not afraid of danger. Their faces were as the face of lions, and even Jordan's swelling floods could not dismay them. They did not wait for propitious circumstances or favorable seasons, but they made circumstances subservient to their high purpose and turned difficulties into stepping-stones of victory. They came up to Jordan in the first

month, when all its waves had overflowed, and they found on both banks of the river a strong force of armed foes; but they met their enemies on the eastern shore and scattered them, and then they plunged into the swollen floods and swam and forded the raging Jordan, and when they landed on the western bank, lo, another army was confronting them. But again they charged their foes and scattered them, and came to David victorious over flood and foe.

And so the men that would make Jesus King must not wait for favorable circumstances nor be intimidated by the devil's growl. The best evidence that you are in God's will will often be some sudden difficulty, some fierce assault of the foe, some bitter trial of your faith. When Paul began his great campaign to give the Gospel to Europe, the first place he found himself was in the Philippian jail with bleeding limbs and feet fettered in stocks. But this did not dismay him. Rather he accepted it as a pledge of the devil's hate and the Father's love and he went forward undismayed until all Europe had received the Gospel, and victory had been wrung from the defiance of the foe. God is preparing men today for days of conflict, danger and the utmost trial, before the Lord shall come. Let us not shrink from the higher

classes in the University of God and the School of Sorrow. There all great souls have graduated, and there all high character must be proved. God give us courage, and make us brave enough to believe all that this Book declares, to testify to all we believe, to live all that we testify, to do what others only dream about, and glory in what others dare to do.

ALL-ROUND MEN.

IV. They were all-round men. "They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left." So many Christians have only one hand for service; the other is so busy grasping the world that they cannot be whole-hearted for God, or free-handed for work. So many men can work when things suit them, but cannot adjust themselves to unfavorable circumstances and unusual methods. God wants ready men, and all-round men, who can meet the devil, who can touch their fellow-men at every point, and who can adjust themselves to all the necessities of the Master's work.

MEN OF FAITH.

V. They were men of faith. "They could handle shield and buckler." The shield is the type of faith. The buckler is the type of a

kind of faith that we do not have to keep, for it keeps us. It is what Christ calls "the faith of God." It is a divine trust wrought within us by the Holy Ghost and fixed, like the buckler, which was fastened on the arm, and still remained even though the shield might fall and every other defence be lost. The work of hastening our Master's kingdom needs men of mighty faith, with a divine trust which rests not even on their own best feelings, but is nothing less than the faith of the Son of God who lives within.

SELF-SACRIFICE.

VI. They were men of self-sacrifice. They shrank from no peril or pain when their leader needed their service or their sacrifice.

A noble example is given of three of these heroic men who one day, when David longed for a drink from the well of Bethlehem by his father's gate, dashed through the ranks of the Philistines, who filled the valley between, and while their enemies scattered on either side, or looked on with amazement, they brought back a helmet full of crystal water and handed it to their king. But David would not drink of that which was the blood of men who had jeopardized their lives for him.

The richest quality of love is sacrifice, and the noblest credential of any work is the spirit

on the part of its members which has laid every selfish interest down at Jesus' feet, and counts all things loss for Christ; which holds its money, its friendships, its life, all subservient to the Master's claim, and, living a dying life, at last gives life itself as a willing offering to Him who gave His life for us. In this selfish and luxurious age, it is the rarest quality found, but it is the most needed, and as the end approaches and the last tribulation draws near, the age of martyrdom will reach the climax, and the tears of sorrow and the blood of sacrifice be transformed into the jewels of the coronation day. It needs a greater sacrifice sometimes to live than to die, and the men who will be found some day ready to die for Christ are those whose lives are now laid down in ten thousand little tests that come to us all from day to day.

WISE MEN.

VII. They were wise men. "They had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do." Christ needs more than blind devotion. He wants intelligent partnership in service. He still needs men that have understanding of the times, not wasting their lives on ideas that are obsolete and for work that is needless, but grasping the Master's thought and working out His plan for the age in which

we live. "David served his own generation by the will of God." It is a great thing to understand the will of God for our own generation and fulfil it. Millions of money are thrown away today in building costly cathedrals and ambitious universities for the display of man's ecclesiastical and intellectual pride, none of which helps forward in the faintest degree the kingdom of God or the coming of Christ. Many a well-meant offer is wasted for lack of sympathy with the Master's thought. Millions are giving and working today to get the world converted instead of working intelligently with Christ to gather out a people for His name, and to hasten His return, and the inauguration of that day which will accomplish more for the conversion of the world than all the centuries of our ignorance and failure.

DISCIPLINE.

VIII. They were disciplined men. "They were men that could keep rank." They were working together. They were working in unity, in order, and in wise organization. Many a brave man throws his life away in isolation and independent efforts, and they fail because of no wise co-operation. The great work of missions requires fellowship of service, and intelligent organization by which workers on

the field can stand in touch with those at home, and all together move as an army in wise and intelligent co-operation. Christ wants men who are able to subordinate their own strong opinions and work in subjection to one another in the fear of God. No man is fit to lead until he has long learned to follow. No man is a good commander who has not proved a perfect soldier. No lesson needs more to be learned by young missionaries than the lesson of humility and mutual subjection in Christian service. It has been wisely said that there is no trouble in getting along with a fully consecrated Christian, but a half consecrated one is always in trouble and always getting others into trouble.

PATRIOTIC.

IX. They were men of one patriotic purpose to make David king. They had a sublime ambition and a single aim, and to this all else was subordinate. They were there to make David king. This suggests the real purpose of Christian consecration and service in our day. Our business is to make Christ King. It is not to achieve for ourselves a high position. It is not even to save a great multitude of souls. It is not even to build up a cherished cause, but it is so to sacrifice and witness that we will hasten the return of our blessed Lord.

It may be hastened. God's times are not wholly regulated by the progress of centuries and the lapse of years, but by spiritual conditions. One generation may live as much as ten that preceded it; and by wise and patriotic energy we may hasten the coming of the Lord in our own lifetime by working for the preparation of His Bride and the immediate evangelization of the world. Often in the last few years it has seemed as if the providential conditions of His advent were just about to be fulfilled, and the great political events of the world were converging to the crisis, but something seems to hold, and that one thing is the spiritual preparation and the sanctification of Christ's own people, and the calling out from among the Gentiles of the remnant of His Bride.

Let this be our great object, and thus let us be of one heart to make Jesus King. That is what our world needs. All other plans must fail, all other governments disappoint, all humanitarian, moral, social or political movements end in confusion. The only remedy for all earth's wrongs is Jesus. The only campaign that will never disappoint its self-denying leaders and martyr followers is the noble campaign of true hearts bound in one ambition to make Jesus King.

FUTURE KINGS.

And let us not forget that the men who made David king were the men that reigned with him when the kingdom came. The fugitives of the wilderness became the nobles of Israel. The outcasts of Adullam became the aristocracy of Jerusalem. Christ is, as we said at the beginning, calling out not the subjects of His future kingdom but the rulers. The millennium will bring earth's millions to His feet, but these days of testing and of conflict are bringing to Him the tried and the faithful ones who are to sit with Him on His throne, and share with Him the government of the millennial age.

CAPTURING THE STRONGHOLDS

"Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ Jesus" (II. Cor. ii, 14; compare with II. Sam. v. 6-10).

THE remarkable passage which is found above is susceptible of two translations: "Thanks be unto God which always *leadeth* us in triumph," and "Thanks be unto God which always *causeth* us to triumph." Together, they express a profound truth, namely, this: that the conqueror must be first himself subjected, and that it is when we have been led in triumph by our Lord and all our being laid in subjection at His feet that we go forth in turn to be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

JEBUS.

This great truth is illustrated in the story of the capture of Jerusalem and the establishment of David's throne in the ancient stronghold of the Jebusites. Its former name was Jebus, the down-trodden. Its permanent name was Jerusalem, the city of peace. Its story is remarkable.

Naturally impregnable by its situation and its defences this ancient citadel had defied the conquests of Joshua, the Judges, and even Saul. David himself had reigned for seven and a half years at Hebron, and still Jebus was in the hands of the enemy. It was held by a little tribe, many of whom were helpless cripples, but they dwelt so secure in their lofty fastness that they defied their more powerful adversaries. And so centuries had passed, the land of promise had been won, the throne of David had been established, and yet the most beautiful and the most important spot in all the land was held by the enemy.

As soon as David, however, was put in possession of the throne of Israel he decided with great wisdom and force to change his capital from Hebron to Jerusalem—the natural center and metropolis of the land. He offered a splendid bribe to the man who should take it, and Joab was quick to answer the challenge. But so confident were the Jebusites of their absolute security that they laughed to scorn David's peaceful proposition to them to surrender, and they added insult and defiance to their refusal by suggesting to him that the blind and the lame were all the defenders that they needed. With skilful strategy and heroic bravery, Joab had his men scale the lofty citadel

by way of the aqueducts, it would seem, and soon planted the standard of David on the heights of Zion. David's promise to Joab was redeemed, and he became henceforth the commander-in-chief of the armies of Israel. Moreover, the new citadel was immediately changed into a national capital. The loftiest height of Zion became the very stronghold of the city and the site of David's splendid palace, and a few years later the neighboring hills were covered with splendid buildings, and ere long the height of Moriah, a little further to the east, was crowned with the Temple of Solomon, the architectural wonder of the ages.

LESSONS.

The story of Jebus is full of spiritual lessons, and they are lessons of the deepest solemnity and lessons for the children of God at the most advanced stages of their Christian experiences.

I. The Stronghold of the Enemy.

We see in Jebus the picture of the Christian life where, notwithstanding many a spiritual blessing and many a real experience, some secret place, some place of pre-eminent importance, is still under the control of self, or sin, or Satan. The land may be subjected, but one critical point is still held by the enemy.

A FEEBLE FOE.

I. It was a feeble enemy. The Jebusites constituted but a little tribe, and they might easily have been expelled had their individual strength been the only thing considered. Their very smallness led them to be perhaps overlooked and despised. They seem to have had a great many cripples among them, for the walls were garrisoned by the blind and the lame. They were rather a contemptible few, and yet they held the strongest position in all the land of promise, and they held it for centuries. Beloved, there are little foes that are working more harm in our Christian life than more formidable adversaries. There are little borers that perforate the vessel's hull unseen, and in an unsuspected moment the ship founders in mid-ocean. There are little insects whose touch is almost impalpable, but whose sting is death. There are little ingredients, one drop of whose corrosive poison will destroy life itself in a moment. There are little foxes that only destroy the little buds, but with the buds they destroy the fruit and ruin the vines. There are little indulgences and little irritations, and little secret habits, and little dark corners in the heart, where Satan has just hold enough to have a partnership in our life. Like the

petty Hindoo land-owner, who held one small lot in a splendid town and refused to sell it to a wealthy millionaire, who had built a palace near by and wanted to own the whole estate. But the little fellow held on to his corner in spite of the most splendid offers, and one day when he met his wealthy neighbor he looked in his face with an inexpressible glance of vindictive triumph and hissed in his ears the words, "Don't forget, please, you and I own this town." All the devil wants is to have his finger in it, and be a partner in the concern with God and you. It gives him a respectability that the world could not confer. He would rather wear a white necktie than an epaulette. He would rather have a pulpit than a politician's seat. He would rather teach theology in a religious seminary than write the biggest novel of the age. He will let you put ninety-nine parts in the pill and coat it with the finest sugar; only let him insert one grain of arsenic and he is satisfied. Look out for the little Jebusites, and be sure you don't despise the lame ones. There is nothing you so need fear as the harmless habits, as you call them, and which you think you could easily overcome and which you toy with sometimes until they destroy you.

AN ANCIENT FOE.

2. These Jebusites were the descendants of Lot and his degraded daughter. They were born in Sodom, and they retained the awful odor of the slime pits. They represented the natural carnal heart, the things that are born in us, and that come to us by that awful law of heredity which enters so truly into every human life. There are men and women who come into this world under the power of a transmitted curse. It is a frightful thing to be a frivolous, selfish and godless mother, and to transmit your heartlessness and selfishness and deep depravity to the helpless child born of your selfish passion. It is a fearful thing to be an intemperate and brutal father and pass on to another life the frightful disposition which has made you a blot and a bane to every life which you have touched. Surely, it ought to be enough to live your worthless life without repeating the tragical story in some other existence which cannot help the misfortune of being born with your transmitted wickedness burning like an unquenchable fire in the very veins. It is a sad and bitter thing to inherit from a drunken father the love of alcohol, and to drink in from a mother's breast the duplicity, intrigue and heartlessness of a worldling's life and find yourself with a thousand foes

within you to strive for your will and your self-restraint until you are often forced to cry, like one of old, "Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon."

God knows this fight to be true and this principle to be a real moral power, and He has the deepest sympathy for those who come into existence with a birthright of terrible temptation. It is vain and presumptuous for you to think that you can overcome such adversaries. You cannot without the omnipotent grace of God, and even this will mean a battle as strenuous and as stern as life and death. Recognize at its full weight the power of your adversary and take God alone for the victory. You have not only an aggravating foe around you, but you have an inveterate enemy within you coiled around your very heartstrings and interwoven with the fibers of your being. It is the race of the Amorite. It is the carnal mind which "is enmity against God and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

A PERSISTENT FOE.

3. This tribe of Jebus had stuck to its stronghold for more than five hundred years. Joshua's army had marched about, but the Jebusite still remained. Caleb's heroic followers had captured Hebron, but still the enemy held

Jerusalem. The sun stood still on Gideon and the moon o'er the valley of Ajalon, but the lofty heights of Zion were still securely held by the Amorites. Gideon's hosts swept on in victorious battle, Jephthah's legions drove out the vaster hordes of the neighboring nations, Samson went to and fro with gigantic strides, Jonathan and his armor-bearer smote the Philistines, Saul passed with his victorious armies from stronghold to stronghold and blotted out the whole tribe of Amalek, and even David was crowned king and had reigned for seven and a half years at Hebron, the type of Christ's victorious reign, and yet there was Jebus with its defiant defenders laughing at them. Oh, how it speaks of some enemy that has hidden away in your heart through years of blessings and victories of grace!

You have been converted, but still it has remained. You have seen yourself and your sin and yielded in sincere consecration and surrender up to all the light you had, and still that hidden foe was undisturbed. You have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and Christ has come to reign in the Hebron of your heart, and made it a place for His heavenly fellowship and love, yet yonder, in the depths of your being, there is a place where self and Satan still have enough control to

assert themselves when they choose. Perhaps it is a little bit of the world still cherished. Perhaps it is a secret bitterness if not a forbidden love. Perhaps it is a friendship that God does not control. Perhaps it is a secret indulgence that you think as trifling as the blind and the lame of Jebus. Perhaps it is a habit that you have justified or ignored. Perhaps it is your cigar or your snuff-box, or your novel, or your love of music, art or the theater. Perhaps it is your sickness, which you fondly cherish as an angel of light, and put the blind and the lame on your fortifications as the defenders of your sanctification, and tell how much these things do to keep you humble and holy. Perhaps it is a little cherished misery or morbidness, just the faint right to pity yourself and feel bad sometimes; a little Jebusite just big enough for Satan to say, "Now, mind that you and I own this citadel."

A DANGEROUS FOE.

4. An important foe. The worst of all is that this subtle foe is usually enthroned in the most important center of our life. The Jebusites held the best position in the land. It was the very spot that God wanted for His capital. And so the thing which Satan seizes is always the best thing; and the place where self sits

down is always the very throne of the heart. The devil does not want the offscourings of society. It is the noble, the beautiful, the gifted, the highborn, the men and women that should have been the very princes of the kingdom of heaven, that he selects as the instruments of his destructive sway, and the part of your being that he seeks to control is always the strategic point. It is your heart that he is aiming for, it is the singleness of your purpose toward God. It is your very spirituality that he will seek, and as an angel of light if he can sit down in the very secret of your being, and make you serve him while you think you are doing God's very will, he is satisfied. It is Jerusalem that he uses for his reign. God helps us to understand him, to expose him, to expel him, and, like David, to make his seat the very throne of heaven and the very glory of our after life.

Do not say, "I am not saved." "I am not sanctified, because I have discovered this thing still within my heart." I have been saved, I am utterly surrendered, but I have not known all the depths of Satan and the disguises of sin, but as I enter into the deeper light and larger opportunities I will have all "that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

II. The Victory.

THE COURAGE OF FAITH.

1. A brave, victorious struggle. It was not an easy conflict. The height of Zion stands three hundred feet above the valley of Hinnon, and up that cliff they had to climb and scale those rocks before they could drive out the enemy. And it is not easy for us to fight the good fight of faith, and refuse the insinuating wiles of self and Satan. Many a bitter tear, many a night of agony may have to intervene, and he who is not brave enough to suffer and to say "No" to himself can never enter into the heights of Zion and sit on the throne of David. He that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." God help us to be brave enough to conquer self and to sit down with Christ upon His throne.

THE STRATEGY OF FAITH.

2. A wise conflict. It needs more than courage to win this conflict. We have the evidence of the deepest strategy as well as courage in the assault of Joab. David himself suggested the plan of the attack. It was to be by way of the "gutters." These gutters seem to mean the water-courses or the aqueducts by which the city was supplied across the valley of the

south, from the fountains on the heights of Bethlehem. But through these water-courses Joab's men seem to have somehow waded or climbed, and then entered the unsuspecting city, carrying all before them. This suggests, too, not unnaturally, that we, too, must win our fight by holy wisdom. We are not strong enough to overcome our spiritual foes, but there is a way by which we, too, may climb through the water-courses and accomplish by divine power what we ourselves are unequal to. Water is always the symbol of the Holy Ghost, and it is the Spirit that lifts up the standard when the enemy comes in like a flood. There is a heavenly stream into which we may plunge, and it will bear us through the difficulties and over the obstacles that we never can surmount.

A traveler tells a little incident which perhaps is in keeping with this thought and may illustrate this lesson. A little party descending one of the glaciers above the valley Chamouni, in Switzerland, suddenly found that the pass was closed by a heavy accumulation of ice and snow, and they could go no farther down. It was too late to go back, for the night was on, and it seemed at first that they must perish. But the guide looked carefully and noticed that the little stream, which they had been follow-

ing, cut a channel in the ice, and he could hear it thundering on the other side of the mountain as it fell into the valley below. In a moment his resolution was made, and, bidding his companion follow him, plunged into the current and was followed by his dazed but obedient fellow-traveler. There was a sudden shock, a rush of waters, a moment of darkness, a strange terror and then a blaze of light, and they were thrown out on the other side of the mountain on the green, smooth bank of the little river in the valley of Chamouni. They had trusted themselves to the water-course and it had carried them through all their obstacles and difficulties.

Beloved, there are times when we fight in vain against our barriers and against our foes. There is a better way. Turn from self and Satan and everything inward and turn upward to Him, receive the Holy Ghost, commit your way to God, wait on Him, be filled with the Spirit, plunge into the water-course, the current of God's mighty life and love, and you will forget your foes, you will forget yourself, and you will find yourself filled with God and lifted high above all your enemies and all your trials. Plunge into the water-course and let God make you "more than conqueror."

III. The Glorious Recompense.

THE CAPTAIN.

There were two splendid results that followed this victory; the first was Joab's leadership over the armies of Israel, and all the victories that afterward followed. And so when we win the complete victory over ourselves we shall henceforth become conquerors, too, and a life of triumph shall surely follow. Led in triumph we shall always triumph. Oh, beloved, the reason you are always failing is because you have not allowed God to overcome in the supreme test of your life.

THE CAPITAL.

The second result was the establishment of the city of Jerusalem as the throne of David, and, later, the throne of God; for this is God's chosen city. It is not only the capital of Israel, but it is the city of the great King, and in the coming days it is to be the center of the earth, and perhaps in the same sense, the metropolis of the universe. And so when we let God overcome and win for us the victory of our lives in the hardest place, God chooses that place and sets His heart upon it, and loves it and honors it and uses it. And so the men and women that have dared to be true, and that, in the

supreme test of their lives, have yielded and died to self and become God's bond slaves, God's conquered ones, and God's conquering ones.

Beloved, what is the lesson for your life? Is there still some hidden thing, some unconquered place, some refuge of the enemy tolerated in the kingdom of your heart? God help you to see it, and to meet the issue as David did of old.

And so it comes to pass that we sometimes see a life that has seemed to be right and even eminently useful, at length go down like some noble ship at sea, and many have wondered and stood in awe. Ah, it was because there was a Jebus that had been left in the hands of the enemy, and in an unguarded hour the hidden foe arose and overcame the heart that had dwelt at ease.

TRANSFORMATIONS.

And so, on the other hand, it comes to pass that we see a life that has gone on in comparative failure, and with little promise of strength or nobility, suddenly rise to the loftiest heights of heroism and spiritual power and become the glory and inspiration of some great movement; and we wonder, but when the secret is disclosed it will be found that it is the old story of

Jebus, that the heart had found its secret foe, had risen as David rose against the Jebusites, had expelled the lingering enemy, and had turned the place of subjection into the place of triumph.

Oh, shall some one who reads these lines awake to righteousness today, and from this moment rise to be a conquered one and then a conqueror through Him that loved us, and a conqueror, yes, and "more than conqueror, through Him that loved us"?

GUIDANCE AND VICTORY

"Put on the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

"Take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand" (Eph. vi, 11, 13, compared with II. Sam. v, 17-25).

THERE is an old couplet full of deep instruction and suggestiveness which runs as follows:

"If conquered, for to-morrow's fight prepare,
If conqueror, of to-morrow's fight beware."

This is finely illustrated by a significant and striking incident in the life of David. He had just achieved the most splendid victory of his life, and secure in the fastness of Zion he might well defy, if any ever might, the threatenings of his foes, and might indeed be tempted to imagine that his protracted conflicts were over. But this superb victory was immediately followed by some of the severest tests and, as we look at the picture, we are reminded for ourselves that the very time to expect temptation

is in the hour of triumph, and that there are many deep lessons to be learned every step of our pathway if we would escape the wiles of the devil and stand at last, having done all.

TEMPTATION.

I. We see an example of temptation after victory. "When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel all the Philistines came to seek David." It was when they heard that he was crowned that they came to take him. It is when God has signally blessed us and sealed us by His Holy Spirit's power that the adversary always seeks to assail us. He feels it is a crisis hour and he must challenge our high position and drive us back from this advance ground or his control over our lives will be lost. Therefore it happens after we enter upon the highest blessing we are always exposed to the fiercest conflict. The new convert expecting to find a life of delightful freedom from the things that have assailed his life, is plunged into the severest testings. The newly consecrated life, glowing with high hope and holy purpose, finds itself confronted by the most subtle forms of strange temptation, and the first impulse is to become discouraged and to feel a touch of bitter disappointment. The real truth is we never feel temptation until

we resist it. The man who is following his natural bent is unconscious of any opposing current, and his life is one of passive peace, but when we meet with the fires of evil within us and the adversary beside us, then we understand a little of what the apostle means when he speaks of withstanding in the evil day. It seems at such times as if all the Philistines had come up against us, and there was not a temptation in the category of evil which had not tried its hand upon our encompassed spirit. Let us not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try us as though some strange thing happened unto us, but let us remember Him who, after the baptism at the Jordan, was immediately led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and let us rejoice inasmuch as we are partakers of the sufferings of Christ that when His glory shall be revealed we may be glad also with exceeding joy.

VIGILANCE.

II. We see an example of prudence in meeting temptation. When David heard that the Philistines had come up against him we read that he went down into the hold. Doubtless that means the stronghold of Zion, which may have been at a little lower level on the height than his palace and his headquarters. He im-

mediately took refuge in the fort. He did not rashly and impulsively dash into battle without divine direction, but he took refuge in the hiding-place that God had afforded him. He went down to a lower level of humility and safety, and he waited for divine instruction. When the enemy comes the truly wise and brave spiritual soldier will always go down into the hold. He will humble himself at the Master's feet. He will take refuge behind the defences which God has provided him, and he will wait for orders from on high. There is no real courage in making light of danger, and the wise soldier of the cross knows that he is no match for Satan. God will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able to bear, but let us not forget what is added: He will also with the temptation make a way to escape. It is often a way of escape rather than a way of attack, and when God has given us our defences let us quickly hide behind them and find refuge for our helplessness, like the little conies in the shelter of the rock.

GUIDANCE.

III. Next we have an example of implicit dependence upon Divine guidance. David inquired of the Lord. He was a trained soldier and a skilled strategist, but he did not trust

his skill or strength, but went like a little child to his God and asked immediate counsel. It is very remarkable to notice the form in which he asked counsel. He did not first ask if He should be successful, but he first asked what the Lord wanted him to do. His primary desire was to please God; his second request, to know what God was going to do for him. This is very beautiful and very important. It is much more natural for us to say, "Lord, will you bless me in this?" and then if He promises us prosperity we are disposed to accept His direction and go forward in it. David's attitude was far more single and sincere. With him the supreme question was, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and quite subordinate to that was the other, "Lord, what wilt Thou do with me?" There are instances where God bids us go forward when it is to face suffering, self-denial and, it may be, even death. It was there that the spirit of the Hebrew witnesses came out so clearly in ancient Babylon, "If it be so, our God is able to deliver us out of the burning fiery furnace, but if not we will not worship thy gods nor the golden image which thou hast set up." Let us only be sure of the path of duty, and then we can confidently ask the Lord to take care of us. And so God gave David both assurances. First, He

told him what to do, and then He promised him absolute and certain victory. Oh, how safe it is to go forward with God's assurance! Nothing can daunt us, nothing defeat us.

PRAISE.

IV. We see an example of modest and becoming acknowledgment of God as the source of victory. When the Philistines were defeated and scattered before the power of God and the onset of David, he did not, like Saul, set up a pillar of personal celebration, but he commemorated the praise and honor of God alone and gave Him all the glory. "The Lord," he said, "hath broken forth upon mine enemies as the breaking forth of waters." We are not told anything about the spoil that he took, but we are very distinctly told that he destroyed the images of the Philistines. It was a holy war, and David was much more concerned to destroy the enemies of God than to secure his own trophies of victory.

A NEW TEST.

V. We see an example of repeated temptation on the very same lines. It was not very long before the Philistines came up again into the same valley. This time, no doubt, they came with greatly augmented forces, and de-

terminated that they should avenge themselves upon their enemy and recover their lost prestige.

The spiritual lesson here is very important. God sometimes suffers us to be tempted over again on exactly the same lines, even where we have had complete victory before. It may be the devil wants to surprise us through our very security, as we are less likely to expect him to repeat his attack. It may be that God wants to teach us, as in the present instance, some new lesson. It often is because we have not quite triumphed on this line before, and God is good enough to give us a second opportunity. Let us never be too sure of the subjugation of our Philistine foes, but let us ever watch and be ready.

A NEW WAY.

VI. We see the same temptation met in an entirely different way. This was the great lesson that God was seeking to teach David and us also. Our danger is, when a similar experience comes, to go on by the force of habit on the same lines, and thus really be trusting unconsciously in our own experience and wisdom. David was graciously delivered from this. It would have been perfectly natural for him to say, "I have defeated these Philistines

here before, and I have only to do as I did then and I shall defeat them again." But David, with great wisdom and simplicity, went straight to God, as though he had had no experience and possessed no wisdom of his own, and he was rewarded by receiving an entirely different direction. "Thou shalt not go up against them," said the oracle, "but fetch a compass behind them and come upon them over against the mulberry trees." God had an entirely different lesson this time, and David was wise enough to be open to receive it. There are times when we are not to face the foe but to seem to retreat from the foe and let God fight our battle for us. A retreat is often a flank movement and a more certain victory. There are people who attack us that we can better answer by leaving alone. There are things that are said against us that can be most strongly met by silence. There are inward conflicts which, the more we think about, the more we provoke, and the best way is to turn from the conflict and be occupied with God.

But the great lesson is that of listening, hearkening and obeying. We may often begin a good thing with God and end with ourselves, and there is failure. And so David clung close to God all the way through, and waited every

moment for His direction in the minutest details.

THE SOUND OF A GOING.

VII. We have an example of God's manifest interposition in the trials and conflicts of His children. There is a very sublime picture given in this incident of the unseen forces that are in alliance with God's faithful and obedient children. The Hebrew language, in which the march of these heavenly hosts is described, is exceedingly sublime. "It shall be when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees thou shalt bestir thyself, for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the hosts of the Philistines." In the original the style is dramatic and majestic, and it suggests the march of mighty armies in the air. The rustling of those leaves was caused by no passing breeze, but David knew that myriads of angels and chariots of fire were sweeping down the fields of air, and that his little army was just following in the train of the legions of the sky. All he had to do was to wait for the signal to advance. But he must wait. A premature step would have been an error, and perhaps a fatal blunder.

During the battle of Waterloo, Wellington posted a brave detachment of British troops on a salient point of the field, and their orders

were to stand firm and hold the point at all hazards. Again and again through that awful battle they had opportunity to charge upon the foe, and again and again their leader sent an orderly to the headquarters of Wellington to ask permission to charge, but again and again he sent back the answer, "Stand firm." One by one the little band slowly fell without being permitted to make that charge for which they were so eager, and at last the messenger left the Duke of Wellington with the words, "You will find us all there." When the battle was over they lay in a heap slain, but they had proved a living wall against the foe. That point was the key to the situation. The secret of victory was to wait and obey orders.

TARRY.

And so our heavenly Master bids us wait as well as go. "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high," is essential to all true success when we do go forward. We are to wait for "the sound of a going," not on earth, but in the air, the moving of the breath of the Holy Ghost. It is hard to explain to any dull spirit what this means. There are lives that, like the dull-eyed ox, never catch a gleam of the light from the heavens, but see only the pasture field and fod-

der trough. There are others that are open to the voices that all cannot hear and visions which many never see. We do not mean the trance vision of the fanatic, but the deep spiritual impulses and elevations which God still gives to sensitive hearts and quickened ears and eyes. They come to us when the Holy Ghost is pressing down upon our hearts with the baptism of power. They come to us when we have gone through the hour of trial, and our heart is bursting for some message from our Father to comfort and inspire. They come to us in the crisis time of life, when everything around is dark and difficult. They come to us in the providences of God when strange things lie in life's pathway and the heart instinctively responds, "It is the Lord." They are coming to us in the signs of our times, in the wonderful movements of our day, in the providences of God among the nations, in the shaking of the kingdoms of the earth and the harbingers of the coming of Christ. Oh, surely, there is a "sound of a going" in the earth and air and sky. God give us eyes to see and ears to hear and an understanding of our times!

WORKERS WITH GOD.

VIII. There is one more lesson of supreme importance, namely, the necessity of our co-

operation with God when He begins to move. There was something for David to do as well as God, and that was to bestir himself when he heard the sound of a going. God's work did not displace David's, but it only led up to it; and it required that David should be the more alert and prompt to follow it up with intense activity and holy courage. There is a time to tarry, but there is a time to go out, and the men that have best learned to tarry know best how to go. Christian life is no dream, no listless, sentimental waiting for something to happen, but it is the posture of hearkening until we hear His voice, and then it is the attitude of intense obedience, alacrity and holy activity in fulfilling our great commission, and making the most of the divine opportunity and the infinite resources which heaven has placed at our command. There is a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees. Let us bestir ourselves. It is a time of marvelous opportunity in Christian life and Christian work and the world's evangelization. God teach us to tarry in Jerusalem until we are endued with power from on high. God enable us then to go in the power of the Spirit and disciple all nations, and so haste the coming of the Lord.

THE ARK IN ZION

“Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the ark of Thy strength” (Ps. cxxxii. 8; compare with II. Sam. vi. 1-23).

AFTER the capture of Jebus and the establishment of the national capital at Jerusalem, David's next great public act was to remove the ark of the covenant from its resting-place in the house of Abinadab to its permanent abode in Zion. This was an act of great significance, expressing in the most emphatic manner the covenant of God, of whose presence the ark was the especial symbol, as the Sovereign of His theocratic people.

REMOVAL OF THE ARK.

Its removal was accompanied by the most stately ceremonies. The king himself, with his courtiers and ecclesiastical officers, went down to Gibeah and accompanied the ark on its journey. They seem to have overlooked the special command of God in the Levitical law, that the ark should be carried only by the Levites, but they put it upon a cart borne

by oxen, and on the way the oxen shook it so that Uzzah, one of the sons of Abinadab, in attempting to steady it touched it with his hands, and was suddenly stricken down by the hand of God for his presumption.

This so appalled the king and his attendants that they left the ark for a time in the house of Obed-edom, but three months later, learning that God, instead of letting it be a curse, had made it a blessing to Obed-edom and his house, David renewed the attempt, and, with imposing ceremonies, the ark was finally transferred to Jerusalem. David participated in the dances with unreserved joy and ecstasy in the public procession, disgusting his wife, Michal, and bringing upon himself her scorn and rebuke.

PSALMS OF COMMEMORATION.

Some of the finest Psalms were composed in connection with this event, and sung in the responsive service connected with the ascension of the ark. One of these is the 24th Psalm, where the two choirs of priests sing in response:

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.

“Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates, even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

"Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory."

Another of the ascension Psalms is the 15th. "Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill?" Still another is the 132d, expressing in the sublimest poetry the joy of David's heart when he is permitted to "find out a habitation for the Lord, the Mighty One of Jacob." As they ascend the heights of Zion they sing, "We will go into His tabernacle, we will worship at His footstool," and the chorus resounds, "O Lord, enter into Thy rest, Thou and the ark of Thy strength. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness and Thy saints shout for joy." And then from a responsive choir comes the answer, "This is My rest forever. Here will I dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision, I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation and her saints shall shout aloud for joy."

The 68th Psalm is also connected with this occasion. It commences with the old glorious shout of the wilderness which they used to sing when the ark began to move, "Let God arise

and let His enemies be scattered," and it rises with the ascending ark to the elevated prophetic height of Christ's ascension until the seer beholds in the distance the chariots of the angels that attended the ascent from Mount Olivet to heaven. "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also that the Lord God might dwell among them."

But let us pass from the historical circumstances to the spiritual significance of this scene.

I. The significance of the ark itself. It was the most significant of all the symbols of the Jewish ceremonial system.

RECONCILIATION.

1. It expressed as no other object in all the Mosaic ritual the first principle of the blood—reconciliation to God through the atoning blood. It was a little chest of precious wood covered with gold, and contained the tables of the law and some sacred memorials from the wilderness. Its lid or cover of solid gold was called the mercy seat or propitiation, and was the especial symbol of the atonement. It was always covered with blood, and was peculiarly fitted to suggest the idea of the covering

of human guilt by the vicarious sufferings of Christ. Underneath that cover of gold lay the broken law in the ark. Above shone the Shekinah, representing the face of God, looking down upon the ark, that broken law, the witness of the mercy seat, and the sprinkled blood; and God saw not the iniquities of His people, but the sacrifice of His beloved Son. This is the idea of propitiation. It is expressed in the 32d Psalm, "Blessed is he whose sin is covered." It was finely expressed in the prayer of the penitent, "God be," not merciful, but "God be the propitiation for me, the sinner." It is expressed more perfectly still by the apostle John in the simple evangelical statement, "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

SANCTIFICATION.

2. The ark expressed the idea of sanctification. That ark was the type of Jesus Christ, and it was the sacred depository of the law of God. The first time the law was given at Sinai and the tables were committed to the hands of Moses, as we read in the narrative, he let them fall upon the rocks as he descended from the mount, and they were broken in his hand. This was no mere accident, but it was the sad symbol of the broken law which man had al-

ready shattered by his transgressions. The second time that law was given by God on Mount Horeb and written on new tables of stone, but this time He did not commit them to Moses to keep, but He commanded them to be put in the ark and there preserved. The ark, therefore, was the repository of the law. In this it is a perfect type of Christ, our Sanctifier. God gave us His law the first time and we broke it. He does not now in our sanctification trust us with it, for we should break it again; but Jesus keeps it for us, and keeps it in us. We receive Him into our hearts as an indwelling Presence, as our holy Ark, and in His heart that law is hidden and kept; and He, keeping it in us as once He kept it for us, becomes our sanctification. And so it becomes true, "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

INDWELLING.

3. The ark also signifies God's dwelling in the midst of Israel. It represents not merely the blessings of salvation and sanctification, but the supreme blessing of God Himself, the

glory and strength of Israel and of His people. It means that we have God in His personal Presence and in His infinite all-sufficiency to be our all in all. There were several occasions in the history of Israel when the ark came signally to the front. One of these was when Moses had invited Hobab to be their guide through the wilderness, adding: "Thou shalt be to us instead of eyes." In the very first place we are told that the ark of the covenant removed and went before them to seek out a dwelling-place for them. God was thus emphatically teaching them that He was to be their God, and that no man could be instead of eyes to the people, to whom He says, "I will guide thee with MINE eye."

Again, when they crossed the Jordan the ark went before them, and as the feet of the priests that bore it touched the waters they rolled aside and made a pathway for the people to go over, but when they came to the middle of the stream, to the deepest and most dangerous place, then the ark paused in midstream and waited in the depths of the Jordan until all the host had clean passed over, beautifully setting forth the precious truth that Christ not only goes before us, but holds for us the hardest place and sees us through in the darkest and most dangerous crisis.

II. The removal of the ark to the very citadel of the nation and the throne of Israel was an act of great significance.

JEHOVAH, THEIR KING.

1. It recognized the fact that God Himself was King over Israel. They were seeking out a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob. They were installing their Theocratic King on His own throne. It was the inauguration of Theocracy on a public and permanent basis, and the handing over of the scepter to their heavenly King in the most solemn and impressive manner.

CHRIST'S ASCENSION.

2. It was a type of Christ's ascension to the right hand of God, and, therefore, in the 68th Psalm, the thought of the prophet sweeps forward to the glorious hour when He led captivity captive and ascended on high, taking possession in behalf of His people, not only of the throne of earth, but of the throne of the universe.

THE ENTHRONED CHRIST.

3. It represented the enthronement of Christ in the human heart. It is rather striking that this did not take place until after Jesus was taken from the hands of the Canaanites and

the last relic of the ancient foe was cast out. And so the full enthronement of the Lord Jesus Christ in the human soul must be preceded by a surrender of the last remnant of the life of self and sin. Not only so, there had to be a time of testing. The Philistines came up against David even after the fall of Jebus, and they were driven back and David proved that God was Israel's Almighty King. And so the full government of Christ in the human heart comes after seasons of testing and proving. The baptism of the Spirit came to Jesus on the banks of the Jordan, but it had to be followed by the forty days in the wilderness before the fulness of the power was manifested. We receive the Holy Ghost at the moment of surrender, but we do not realize the fulness of His power until we have been fully tested and stood triumphant with Him in the conflict with evil. There are stages in the manifestation of God's presence and power in the human soul long after the crisis of a spiritual life is passed, and the wise and watchful disciple will be ever pressing on from strength to strength, proving not only that good and acceptable but also the perfect will of God.

A BLESSING OR A CURSE.

III. The Blessing and the Curse brought by

the ark. We read in this chapter of both a blessing and a curse. It was a blessing to the house of Obed-edom, and the presence of Christ is the supreme blessing of a nation, a church, a home and a human life.

But there was a curse as well as a blessing. It is in this chapter we read of the folly and fault of man and the judgment of God. The first was the presumption of Uzzah, for which he was stricken with death, because he tried to steady the ark of God. The next was the blight that fell upon Michal, the wife of David, because, with selfish and proud indifference, she looked with scorn upon the full and holy joy of the king, and felt no sympathy with the enthusiasm of this glorious hour. She was smitten with a withering curse that left her a barren and fruitless branch in the house of Israel. Both of them are fitted to teach us solemn and profitable lessons.

HANDS OFF.

The story of Uzzah leaves one brief and epigrammatic message to all the ages, "Hands off!" It tells us there are some things that we must not attempt to do, even with the best of motives and the most earnest, honest purpose. Uzzah, no doubt, felt that the ark was in danger, and that it was right for him to steady it;

but it was none of his business. It was an interference with God's work for which others were appointed, and his best service was to do nothing but the simple task that had been committed to him—to drive the oxen, and let God take care of His own ark. We, too, must keep our hands off God's cause when it is not our business to interfere.

There are many people who spend their lives trying to keep things straight, and they often get killed, like Uzzah, for their interference. Perhaps God does not always want things straight according to our standards of straightness. God has not only made straight sunbeams, but He has made zigzag lightnings. God has not only Moses and Aaron to prophesy in regular form, but an Eldad and Medad to speak out of time and out of season. God often in His work raises up special geniuses and irregular methods, and in trying to steady them we may destroy the work of God. Very wise was the counsel of Gamaliel, "If this work be of man it will come to naught, but if it be of God let us take heed, lest haply we be found even to fight against God."

We must keep our hands off other people. We must simply let our brother alone, and remember that "to his own Master he standeth or falleth." Miriam, in trying to regulate matri-

monial affairs for Moses, God struck with leprosy, and many a man or woman has been withered for life spiritually because of interference, unkindly criticism, personal animosity, jealousy and bitterness.

There are many things in life we must keep our hands off—cares and worries. Nine tenths of our troubles are troubles that never come. We get into all our hard temptations by touching things that we had better leave alone. A wise Christian will spend much of his life like a good, well-pitched roof, shedding things and letting them roll into the gutter and go into the sewer. Others spend their lives as gutters and sewers, catching all the devil's rain and all the dirty water that his emissaries are so ready to throw out, and passing it on until their own lives become rusted, defiled and polluted.

There are really very few things in the course of a day that we need to think about, and if we should confine ourselves to the actual realities of life we should find it possible to live well and to accomplish all life's real work. There are innumerable worries, annoyances, anxieties, cares, troubles and fears that we can simply let alone. Refuse to think about them. Leave them to God. Hands off!

A Christian woman who had been living a

very unhappy life, and was always overwhelmed with burdens and with cares of the future, came downstairs one morning telling her family that she had had a beautiful dream, and that through it God had delivered her from all her fears and worries. She said she had seen a great crowd of people passing along a broad way, and weighed down by innumerable burdens they were carrying. To and fro in the crowd a lot of imps were passing, throwing these burdens all around, and getting people to pick them up and carry them. Among others she was carrying several of these loads of lead, and was almost worn to death. Suddenly, in the crowd she saw the face of the Lord coming toward her, and she eagerly beckoned for Him to come and help her carry her burden. He looked sternly at her and refused to touch it. He said: "I have no strength for that. I have no grace for loads like this. It is one of the devil's bundles, and all you have got to do is to drop it and you will have plenty of strength for the loads that I bid you carry." It was a revelation to her. She simply dropped the little black bundles, and instantly it seemed that she was winged with strength and gladness, while the Master looked in her face with inexpressible love and said: "Be careful for nothing . . . and the peace of God, which

passeth all understanding, shall keep your mind and heart through Jesus Christ."

THE SIN OF WORRY.

Once more, when we commit our way to God we must keep our hands off. We must let the Lord lead and work. Even though we may not understand His way, we must still believe that all will be well. We must learn the lesson that David has inscribed in the 37th Psalm, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him and He worketh," and then we must add, "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." Anxiety is as much forbidden as stealing. Worry is as wicked as worldliness. In the same breath in which He says, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," the Lord Jesus also says, "Therefore, I say unto you, take no thought of your life."

Now these sins are greatly aggravated in a life of consecration and dedication to God. It is not so strange that the world should worry, that people who know not their God should be continually struggling for themselves and fighting their own weary battles, but it is a dreadful thing for the child of God to commit his way to his heavenly Father, to confess his confidence in His power and love, and then to worry and fret and act as worldlings do. It is

a shameful dishonor to Christ, and it is an aggravated sin by the very fact of our having received the Holy Ghost. It would have been little harm for Uzzah to have steadied his cart had the oxen been bearing a load to market, but it was a very awful thing for him to do so when the living God was in the midst of the burden that he was bearing. It is a very dreadful thing for one in whose bosom the Son of God is enthroned to be fretting and flurrying like the people who know not God. There is a fine story told of an old auntie in the South, who saw a young disciple who had just received the Holy Ghost, acting in some foolish and inconsistent way. "Go softly, honey," she said, "go softly; mind, you are carrying the Holy Child in your arms." Let us go softly, because we bear the mark of God, and in our bosom is enthroned that awful Presence before whom angels bow and veil their faces with their wings,

MEPHIBOSHETH, OR MERCY MEETING MISERY

“When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. x. 6, 10; compare with II. Sam. ix. 1). “And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”

DAVID had now become established upon the throne, and had extended his empire far and wide by numerous conquests, until his kingdom reached from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and covered all the region that God had promised in His covenant with Abraham as the inheritance of Israel. Not only so, he had recognized his Jehovah as the true Sovereign of Israel, and installed the sacred ark in the tabernacle in Zion as a symbol of Jehovah’s presence and sovereignty over all the kingdom. Israel was a true theocracy, and David was only a vicerent of a greater King. His business, there-

fore, was to represent Jehovah in all his works and in all his ways. This gave a high and holy dignity to his person, and a lofty incentive and inspiration to his life. As the representative of Jehovah, and as the great type of the coming Messiah, it became him to walk with a perfect heart, and to show forth in his life the attributes and character of the God he represented. This is indeed the true motive of Christian living. It is only as we stand in the name and stead of Christ, and endeavor to live as those who are called to show forth the character of our great Example and Head, that we shall be lifted above the selfishness and sinfulness of fallen humanity and enabled to walk worthy of our high calling.

DAVID'S KINDNESS.

David, instead of setting an example of royal arrogance and selfishness, felt it incumbent upon him to be a pattern of lowliness, righteousness and mercy. And so, as soon as his throne was established, he began to look about him for objects upon whom he could bestow his kindness. He did not wait for the need to present itself, but he was seeking for an object upon which to pour out his own beneficence and love. It is one thing for us to respond to the appeal of charity when it comes to us, and

it is quite another thing for us to be looking about for objects for our beneficence. This is godlike. God did not wait until man came supplicating at His feet, but the Father sought the wandering prodigal and before Adam ever asked for mercy we hear the pleading of His voice amid the trees of the garden, calling, "Adam, where are thou?" And so we find David asking with beautiful benignity, "Is there any that is left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

In this, David was an example of loftier kindness—even the mercy of that heavenly Father who is ever seeking as well as saving the lost and waiting to be gracious. We have a beautiful example, in this incident, of the mercy of God and the abundant grace which, for Jesus' sake, He vouchsafes to the most hapless and miserable of sinful men.

I. The picture of the sinner's condition.

UNDER THE CURSE.

1. Mephibosheth was a true illustration of the sinner's curse. He was under the shadow of the house of Saul. He was born of a family whose head had left an inheritance of sorrow to all his seed. Saul's sins had ruined his house, and slain all his children but this poor

cripple, in consequence of his follies and crimes. And poor Mephibosheth had been spared only because he wasn't worth killing. This is our lost condition by nature. We are born in the world with an inherited curse. We may argue and criticize as we please the doctrine of the fall, but the stern fact remains to-day patent to every observer that men still inherit in the present life the sins of their ancestors. The pagan father bequeaths his blindness, superstition and degradation to his children. A drunken parent transmits to his posterity a heritage of woe, and all the fine-spun arguments of the critic do not prevent the bitter blight of this hereditary curse. Heredity is a fact in the human life today, and how do we know but that it will be a fact in the eternal tomorrow? God's Book tells us it will be. And so poor Mephibosheth inherited the curse of Saul, and the sinner inherits the curse of fallen humanity. "We are all the children of wrath even as others." It is not that God delights in inflicting hereditary suffering, but it is one of God's own laws, and the only way He can prevent its operation is through the intervention of His mercy, which is now offered to every child of fallen Adam.

HELPLESS.

2. Mephibosheth was helpless. He was lame in both his feet. He was unable to move without assistance, and he is a vivid type of the helplessness as well as the guilt of our human race. People idly talk about the injustice and cruelty of teaching that the heathen must be lost without the Gospel, and they lightly tell us that God is bound in justice to save all men, irrespective of Christ's atonement, if they do right and live up to the light they have. We are perfectly willing to concede that a just and righteous God will always accept a righteous man, and that if there is a heathen on the face of the earth who has obeyed the light of his conscience he will receive divine approval. But here the question ends in a pure theory, for the fact remains that there is not a human being on the face of the earth that is able to live up to the light of his conscience without supernatural assistance.

The very essence of man's fall is helplessness. Like Mephibosheth, he is lame in both his feet, and the cry of the wisest and noblest sages in every age has been, "When I would do good evil is present with me. I know better, but I do not do it. I see the right and hate the wrong, but something attracts me into it all the same. I condemn myself, and yet I

do the things which I condemn." Man's supreme need is not mercy to forgive his past sins, but power to take away his sinful nature and make him fit for God's heaven. The only remedy, therefore, for fallen humanity is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost to impart a new nature and to give supernatural assistance to enable us to do the will of God.

WORTHLESS.

3. Mephibosheth was a type of the sinner's worthlessness. As he described his own condition he was but a "dead dog," utterly unworthy of David's generosity. God loves not because we deserve it, but because He cannot help it. There is something in Him that draws Him to us, not something in us that claims His approval. "For mine own sake," He says, "do I this, not for your sakes, O house of Israel!" Salvation is an act of unmerited mercy, and God is able to love, to pity, and to choose the things that are despised, and to place a sovereign value all His own on souls which might be called even the devil's castaways.

SEPARATED FROM GOD.

4. Mephibosheth represented the sinner's separation from God. He was living away across Jordan somewhere in the land of Gil-

ead, far from Jerusalem, among strangers, a type of the poor sinner—"an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, a stranger to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye, who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

GOD'S MERCY.

II. We see next the picture of the Father's mercy.

The question of David, "Is there any that is left of the house of Saul that I may show him kindness?" is just a revealing of the heart of God and His great mercy to poor, lost, sinful men. But it was not unconditional mercy. It was all "for Jonathan's sake." There are people today who love to make light of the old Gospel of Christ's atonement and the mercy of God through a Mediator. They tell us that the Father can forgive at His own pleasure and they need no intercessor by whom to approach Him, but can go as the prodigal came to the father, without any reference to the blood of Calvary or the name of Jesus. These people forget that the parable of the prodigal son is only the last of three parables in the fifteenth chapter of Luke, and that there are two that go before without which the third would be

impossible. It is true that the father was waiting to be gracious to his returning son, but we must not forget that before that story could be written it was necessary that the Good Shepherd should go far out into the dark mountains and the cruel night, and suffer bitterly before He could find the lost sheep; and it was necessary that the woman should sweep the house, and seek diligently until she found the treasure. These two parables express the part of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in our salvation, and open the way for the Father's part in welcoming back the returning son. The Good Shepherd is the Son of man going all the way to Calvary to find and save us. The seeking woman is the Holy Ghost sweeping our house and illuminating our dark soul to find the lost treasure. When the Son and the Spirit have done their part then the Father's heart is open, and the Father's way is clear to receive us and bless us. "There is none other name under heaven given among men by which we can be saved but the name of Jesus." You may come and plead for mercy in heaven if you only do it for Jesus' sake. After all the cost of Calvary God will never dishonor nor ignore the dying agony and the precious blood of Jesus Christ, our crucified Redeemer.

III. The picture of God's royal bounty to the returning sinner.

RESTORATION.

1. David gave back to Mephibosheth all the lands of Saul, restoring his lost inheritance in full. And so God gives us back all that we have forfeited through sin, and it is indeed true

"In Him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost."

SONSHIP.

2. But this is not all. God also gives us His own royal bounty. Mephibosheth not only received his forfeited inheritance back, but he was accepted as the child of the king and henceforth ate at the king's table, and was shown all the hospitality of the royal palace. And so God takes us into His heart and home, and makes us His very sons and daughters, and shares with us all the fulness of His love, grace and glory, saying to us, "Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that I have is thine." How rich our inheritance as the children of the King! How infinite our resources! How glorious our prospects! How we should dwell on high, above all low and grovelling things, and bear the dignity of princes of heaven, so that men looking upon us shall say once more,

"Each of them looked like the children of the king." How unworthy to be living a life of discontent, strife and misery. "All things are ours." Let us live as if we meant it, and translate the old psalm into our shining faces and victorious lives, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over."

IV. The grateful return. Mephibosheth was not unmindful or unworthy of David's generosity.

HUMBLE GRATITUDE.

I. He sets us a beautiful example of humility. He calls himself a "dead dog," and he really meant it. He expressed what is just as true of every sinner. The only trouble is that we don't quite believe it. There is nothing more useless and contemptible than a dead dog. Other animals are of some use when dead, but a dog is worse than worthless. Well for some of us if we were truly dead dogs. There is a good deal of a live dog about many professing Christians, with all the snarl and strife of savage brutes. What we need and what Christ expects is that we should take the place of the dead dog and die out forevermore to all our rights and all our pretensions, and get forever out of the way, that Christ may come in with a new life and be forever

the Substitute of our worthless wretched self. The only secret of a sanctified life is to pass sentence of death on all that belongs to you in your natural and former state and never recall it.

Once there lived another man within me,
Child of earth, of self, of Satan he,
But I've nailed him to the cross of Jesus,
And that man is nothing now to me.

That is the only place of rest, the only place of holiness, the only way to find the all-sufficiency of Christ.

Now it is the grace of Christ that brings us there. It is His mercy that slays us. It is when we receive His generous love that we loathe ourselves and want to pass forever out of view. Oh, let us let Him love us to death!

LOYALTY.

2. Mephibosheth was loyal as well as lowly. True, his loyalty was questioned, and he was greatly slandered by Ziba, his unfaithful servant, who complained to David that Mephibosheth was false. But this made no difference to him. He was not loyal as long as David believed in his loyalty. He was not loyal for the sake of being considered loyal, but he was loyal on principle, loyal for David's sake and his

own. It was in him to be loyal, and he could not be disloyal. So loyal indeed was he, that when David came back months later, after his own sad exile, he found that Mephibosheth had been fasting in sackcloth and sorrow all the days of his absence, and nothing could make him happy until the king came back unto his own again.

And when he found that Ziba had ingratiated himself into the favor of David and cheated him out of his inheritance, he manifested a sublime indifference and answered nobly, "Let him take all, inasmuch as the king has come back to his house in peace." Beautiful spirit of disinterested fidelity and noble unselfishness! Unable to enjoy the world until our King has received His inheritance and been requited for His shame and cruel death. Oh, if the followers of Christ were only as true! Oh, if He could but see some of us waiting and watching in grief and sorrow because of His dishonor and His absence! Oh, if we were but as indifferent to the end, and would obey fully, and say, like Mephibosheth, when men take advantage of us, when fortune fails and earthly things go by, Let them go, let them take all, but give me Jesus and my blessed hope and inheritance with Him! Oh, to have such a hope of His coming, such a realization

of His kingdom, such a stake in His future reign, such an inheritance laid up with Him, that the world has dropped away from us by the superior attraction of the world to come! This is true loyalty, and this alone is worthy of His grace and the glory in store for us at His return.

SINS AND SORROWS OF DAVID'S REIGN

"Thou art the man" (II. Sam. xii, 7).

WE have been dwelling on the virtues of David's character and the glories of his reign. But suddenly the sky is clouded, and the chain of blessing rudely broken by a series of sins and sorrows that would crush us with discouragement and despair were it not for the infinite grace that shines out in contrast with man's unworthiness.

The Bible makes no attempt to hide the faults and crimes of its favorite characters. It is not given to reveal the virtues of humanity, but the grace of God, and therefore presents a frank and unbiased picture of man at his best, and then on the dark background of human infirmity and sin it spans the rainbow of heavenly mercy and infinite grace. There are lessons which we can only learn through the sad experience of deepest self-revealing, and David had to go down into the depths of failure in order to rise to the heights of grace.

It is needless to dwell on the familiar details of the sad story of David's fall. Let us also learn its lessons.

I. The causes of his failure :

IN THE WRONG PLACE.

1. The first of these causes was that he was out of his true place. We read in the previous chapter that "at the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel, and they destroyed the children of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem." This was his first mistake. He was out of place. He should have been at the front with his brave soldiers. We are always in danger if we are out of God's order. It matters not where we are; even the house of God, even the quiet chamber of rest, is the place of peril, if God has sent us somewhere else.

IDLENESS.

2. Idleness was the next cause of David's fall. He was unemployed. He was loitering, dallying, drivelling. Luther says that "while the devil tempts other men, the idle man tempts the devil." Satan always furnishes occupation for the unemployed. He is a busy restless spirit, and he lets no man rest. If la-

bor be the curse of Eden, surely God has transformed it into a blessing by laying upon fallen man the blessed influence of pre-occupation as a necessity of his existence. The idle, dallying throng are bound to become vicious. There is no greater curse that you can bequeath to your children than to train them up in luxurious idleness, and there is no greater blessing you can give them than to inure them to habits of industry and toil, and teach them to love work. The silly and sinful novel, the game of cards, the convivial debauch, all these are but inventions to pass the time away, to occupy idle hours, and they breed inevitable sin and sorrow.

SINFUL GLANCES.

3. But the direct cause of David's sin was an unholy look. John Bunyan has told us that we must guard eye-gate and ear-gate, or the adversary will soon capture the citadel of our heart. "Turn away mine eyes from viewing vanity," is the wise prayer of this man, who had found out to his bitter cost the wretched consequences of a sinful glance. And his wiser son has crystallized the same lesson into one of his immortal proverbs when he says, "Keep thine heart above all keeping; for out of it are the issues of life. Let thine eyes look

right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left. Remove thy foot from evil."

Sin does not come to us full born. It is nursed by foolish words, worldly scenes, suggestive pictures and unholy glances. The daily Broadway parade is the nursery of thousands of ruined lives. The shop window is a prolific garden of unholy weeds. The prurient literature of the book stores, the pink page pictures of vice and debauchery, and the abominable theatrical posters that defile the fences of every vacant lot and stamp our cities as modern Gomorrahs—these are the roots of lust and licentiousness—these are the soft-winged moths that breed the worms that destroy the robe of virtue.

THE CURSE OF PROSPERITY.

4. Doubtless there are still deeper causes. David's prosperity had doubtless induced a condition of pride and unwatchfulness, and David's inner life had not kept pace with the extraordinary blessings which God had showered upon his outward circumstances. And so it became necessary that he should be rudely awakened to understand his true spiritual state, and then lifted into a higher, better place.

II. The gradations of David's sin.

The apostle has given us the genesis of evil in a very vivid pedigree. "Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." David's sin was true to this pedigree.

PASSION.

1. It began with an unholy passion. The sin of impurity has been so dangerously gilded with the false light of poetry and romance that the world is in danger of forgetting its sordid beastliness and utter degradation. It is the most debasing of all forms of evil, and most surely and swiftly obliterates all moral principle and religious sensibility from the human soul, deadening and hardening the heart until "being past feeling men give themselves over . . . work all uncleanness with greediness." And yet it is today undermining the family life, the social life and the morals of all civilized communities, and reaches its most fearful maturity in nations that are under the influence of culture and prosperity.

We have only to read the shocking columns of our daily press to understand how truly our social life is being demoralized by the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. Let us never lower the standard of social purity or lightly

esteem the fearful sin which brought upon David and his kingdom the dark shadows that clouded all his future. Passion meets us with a crimson rose and tempting perfume, but behind it is the sting of a thousand thorns and the fetid breath of the pit.

DECEPTION.

2. The next element in David's sin was falsehood, duplicity and deceit. This form of sin almost always leads to deception, evasion and a double life, until the conscience becomes utterly calloused and men and women are living a lie. One would scarcely think that the simple-hearted shepherd of Bethlehem was capable of the deep duplicity that first tried to snare Uriah into hiding the crime of the royal usurper of his home, and, failing in this, by the most cunning contrivance using Joab as a tool to push him into the place of peril and cause his cruel death while, at the same time, palming it all off as an accident of war.

David's heart must have been stung to the quick by the letter he got back from the crafty Joab, who had deeply divined the secret of the king, and sent him this word which sounds like the hiss of a serpent: "And if it be so, that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the

city when ye did fight? then say thou, Thy servant, Uriah the Hittite, is dead also." How utterly hypocritical and devilish was the answer that David sent back to his twin hypocrite, Joab: "Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it, and encourage thou him." To such steps of duplicity may the soul step when once it begins the downward slide of the slimy track of licentiousness and sin.

BLOOD GUILTINESS.

3. But the dark crime of murder was also added to the sin of David. Bitterly and truly might he cry afterwards, "Cleanse me from blood guiltiness, O God!" Little did it avail him to plead an excuse that it was not his hand that struck Uriah down. Truly and terribly might Nathan answer in the name of the Lord, "Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon." It was the sword of Ammon that slew him, but it was David that slew him all the same.

These two sins of uncleanness and bloodshed so terribly linked in the fall of David are the

two sins that are specially held up in the prophetic word as the signs of the last days. "As it was in the days of Lot." This gives us a picture of lust. "As it was in the days of Noah." This is the vision of violence and blood. "So shall it be" in both respects, "in the day when the Son of man shall be revealed." And surely these are the two forms of open iniquity that in our day are becoming most flagrant and most frequent. Look at the columns of our morning papers steeped in filth and blood, with their stories of divorce, intrigue and murder, increasing from year to year far in advance of the increase of our population and far in excess of any other nation. Indeed, these two sins usually go together. The love that fawns today will flame tomorrow as a devouring fire. And indeed it is true, in the most literal sense, that "lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death."

SPIRITUAL DEATH.

4. But there is another sense in which death came to David as the fruition of his crime. It was the death of his conscience and the entire suspension of his moral sensibility. It is frightful to see how speedily and how utterly the sensitive, spiritual nature of this man of God

was paralyzed and petrified by one brief hour of sin, so that for two long years he seems to have been utterly unconscious of having done wrong, and to have enjoyed the fruits of his shameful conspiracy with absolute impunity, not even shedding a tear over Uriah's noble sacrifice, but immediately sending for the wife of the man that he had wronged, and establishing her openly and shamelessly as his wife. Indeed, when Nathan told him the story of the ewe lamb he was quick to condemn the cruel conduct of the oppressor in the parable, and it never even occurred to him that he was condemning himself. Surely this is death. Surely the saddest thing that can come to a noble nature is to sink into the depths of iniquity, and become reconciled to the most revolting associations and vices, and even forget what it once was like to be holy and pure. It is certain that David did not write any psalms during the two years of his profound spiritual catalepsy.

III. The aggravation of David's sin.

HIS AGGRAVATED SIN.

1. It was aggravated by the person who sinned. Sin is always sin ; but sin is more heinous when it is committed by one of whom we might expect better things. David occupied a

pre-eminent position. He had received every kindness from the hand of God. Jehovah might well say to him: "I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul, and I gave thee thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and Judah, and if that had been too little I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in His sight?" And so it is true of us. "Unto whom much is given, of him shall much be required." When God has dealt kindly by us and trusted us with a high calling and a glorious work it is a very fearful thing for us to drag His honor in the dust, and degrade ourselves and our sacred trust by disobedience or unfaithfulness.

AGAINST HIS FRIEND.

2. It was aggravated by the one against whom he sinned. It was against a true and noble man, a man who had done him no wrong, a man who trusted in his royal generosity, a man who left his wife's honor in his keeping, a man who refused even the most innocent indulgence because his king and country were in danger, a man who nobly sacrificed his be-

loved wife and his happy home that he might hasten forth again to the battle-field, who, even when treacherously slain by his king, gladly gave up his life, believing it to be a worthy sacrifice for his sovereign and his country. Against such a man the sin of David was inhuman, monstrous and utterly inexcusable. Well is it portrayed in the simply-worded parable of the poor man with the one ewe lamb, robbed and wronged by a rich oppressor who had all he needed beside and might well have spared that one treasure. And so our sin is aggravated by the person against whom we sin. It is a very dreadful thing to sin against innocence, purity, goodness, loyalty and holiness. It is a very dreadful thing to harm the children of God, for God is their avenger. It is a more dreadful thing to speak or act an injury against the Lord's anointed. There is many a wrecked life today, many an unhallowed grave, and perhaps many a raving maniac because of words hastily spoken and wrongs wilfully done against the servants of the Lord.

AGAINST GOD.

3. It was aggravated by the scandal and blasphemy it brought against the name of the Lord. "By this deed thou hast given great oc-

casion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme." This was the severe aggravation of David's crime, and this always makes the sin of a Christian peculiarly offensive to God. It dishonors Christ and makes Him seem false to a scorning world. God help us to walk humbly and watchfully because we carry about with us the honor of our King!

AGAINST HIMSELF.

4. The consequences of David's sin. God graciously forgave him the moment he acknowledged his transgression, but at the same time He put him under a course of severest discipline and chastisement, which lasted for years and covered the remainder of his reign with many a shadow and many a sorrow. We must understand this principle of God's government.

It is not judgment in fierce anger, but it is a wise and loving chastening intended to teach great moral lessons, and lead the subject into a deeper and better place. There are great laws of moral and spiritual cause and effect which make sorrow inevitably follow hard in the tracks of sin. Grace does not abolish these laws, but grace gives us strength to stand the discipline; but we bring the discipline upon ourselves all the same when we sin, and we

oft make life much harder than it need have been had we walked more closely with our God. It is like the decree which Ahasuerus made against the Jews at the instigation of Haman. Afterwards when Esther pleaded, the decree was not annulled, but, instead, the Jews were given power to defend themselves against it. And so when we turn to God there are things which meet us in our lives hard and strange, which God does not always put aside, but He gives us grace and strength to go through the ordeal in victory. He gave this to David; but, oh, how much David might have escaped if he had stood true to God to the end!

Seven great troubles entered into his cup of sorrow. The first was the death of the child born of this unholy passion. The second was the ruin of Tamar, his beautiful daughter, by the crime of Amnon, her half brother. Next was the murder of Amnon by Absalom. Then came the rebellion of Absalom and his cruel death, which broke David's heart. And then came the curse of Shimei, and a terrible pestilence that almost blotted out Jerusalem. Last of all came the rebellion of Adonijah, and even the complicity of Joab with him. What a catalogue of sorrows—all the brood of that single sin! "Be not deceived, God is not mocked,

for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap."

IV. Mercy triumphing over judgment. Out of all this and above all this comes the "clear shining after the rain," and the marvelous grace of God in the later history of David.

LED TO DEEPER LIFE.

I. There was the deeper life it brought to his soul. It was a life through death. It was in this that he learned, as he tells us in the twenty-third Psalm, to "go through the valley of the shadow of death," and to come out on the other side with a newer, higher life. It was in this experience that he learned the secrets that he has evolved in the fifty-first Psalm, where he can look down into the full depths of his iniquity and say, "My sin is ever before me," and from there he can look up through the blood into the unclouded light of the throne, and say with profound confidence, "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." Marvelous paradox of faith! The deepest sin the brightest glory. The darkest stain the whitest robe. Crimson and scarlet stains, but whiter than the snow, and spotless as wool cleansed to its finest fiber. It was in this that he learned in advance of his times the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and could sing, in the

penitential Psalm, that wondrous song and prayer: "Renew a right spirit within me. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Uphold me with Thy free Spirit." Henceforth he lived the resurrection life, and he knew the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF LOVE.

2. Not only so, God transformed the outward circumstances so that the curse at last became a blessing, and the second son of this same Bathsheba was chosen by the Lord to be the heir to his throne. And we read about him this wonderful testimony: "He called his name Solomon, and the Lord loved him, and he sent by the hand of Nathan, the prophet, and called his name Jedediah, because of the Lord."

The lesson it teaches us is this, that if we deeply and thoroughly repent, if we pass judgment unreservedly upon our sinful self, and accept the mercy of God in its fulness and freeness, we shall not only be forgiven but restored, and some day in yonder world of glory, of which Solomon was the type, we shall find the curse transformed into a blessing, and "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar a myrtle tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

ABSALOM

"Is the young man Absalom safe?" (II. Sam. xviii, 32.)

HOW could he be safe! How could any young man be safe with such a character and life as his! Vainglorious, worldly-minded, disobedient and disloyal to his loving father, passionate, vindictive, self-indulgent and shameless in his profligacy, full of duplicity and deceit and utterly destitute of moral principle or real godliness—how could even a father's love save such a boy from inevitable ruin! The only good that such a life can do is to be a beacon upon the shores of danger, warning other men from his terrible mistakes and fearful destruction.

A SAD PICTURE.

A king and a father sat in the gates of Mahanaim, waiting for tidings from the neighboring battlefield. All day long the fight had raged in the woods of Ephraim, while on one side Amasa led the hosts of Absalom, the army of the rebellion and on the other hand Joab

commanded the trained veterans of David as they fought for their king and their country against the treacherous legions who gathered to the standard of the usurper. Fierce and long the battle waged, but as the sun began to wane the veterans of David's army prevailed, and the hosts of Absalom began to melt away in retreat and terrible slaughter. Pressing hard in close pursuit Absalom himself was overtaken in the forest, and was found by one of Joab's followers hanging from an oak by his splendid tresses of flowing hair, which had caught in the thicket and suspended him while he was still alive, so that he was helpless to extricate himself. Joab needed no further notice to strike the fatal blow which removed at once the head and cause of the rebellion. With three darts flung by his own hand he pierced the heart of the wretched man and then left him to his soldiers to cut to pieces and bury under a heap of stones in the wilderness.

When they found that Absalom was dead the pursuit was recalled and the battle ceased. Then Joab sent a swift courier to bear the tidings to the king. They had with difficulty restrained him from taking part in the battle. Well they knew that his fondness for his foolish boy would probably risk the victory to save his son, and they persuaded him that his

life was worth ten thousand and must not be rashly ventured. But he gave them the tenderest charges for the security of Absalom and waited eagerly to hear the earliest tidings from the field.

As the sun was sinking in the west he looked across the country, and, lo, in the distance a cloud of dust betokened a swift runner. Sweeping forward to the gate of the city came Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, David's friend, and throwing himself upon his face upon the ground he quickly told the story of the victory of David's army. But the king was as though he heard not, and with eager heart he cried, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz's heart was too tender to tell the truth, and so he gently avoided the question. Meanwhile another runner was descried swiftly following the first, and as he came near him shouted out the story of the triumph, too. But again the king with bursting heart asked the tender question, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Cush, who was not as thoughtful as the other, but whose only idea was to tell the message in all its meaning, let out the dreadful secret as he answered, "The enemies of my lord, the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is." That answer broke the father's heart. Hurrying to

his chamber he burst out in bitter wailing: "Oh, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, oh, Absalom, my son, my son." His grief was inconsolable, and at last even Joab had to go and remonstrate with him about the dreadful shadow he was throwing upon the hearts of the brave men that had risked their lives to save his life and kingdom. "Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life and the lives of thy sons and thy daughters in that thou lovest thine enemies and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; for this day I perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well." This was sufficient to arouse the king from his stupor of agony, and he came back to his palace and rallied the scattering forces who had already begun to steal away. But that weight of sorrow never left his heart, and well might he groan for the foolish boy whose life had gone out that day in darkness and despair, which none better knew in all its meaning than the godly king, who understood better than Absalom the meaning of eternal retribution, whose own hands had written the solemn words, "The redemption of

their soul is precious and it ceaseth forever." Let us pause while still we may receive and profit by the warning of this ruined life, and look at the secrets of his failure and the lessons of his terrible example.

THE FALL OF PRIDE.

I. The first and most predominant feature in Absalom's character was his vanity and self-conceit. His personal appearance was strikingly beautiful. He was the handsomest man in Israel, and from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet there was no blemish in him. This, instead of a blessing, became, as it often does, a bane, and led him to center his life in himself, and it became conceited, vain-glorious and utterly selfish. Personal vanity is weak and sad even in a woman, but in a man it is contemptible. Beauty loses its charm when the possessor becomes conscious of it. Personal appearance ceases to attract us when the possessor is manifestly aware of it. To spend one's life in making a good appearance, in studying the latest fashions in garments, neckties and society manners, is an occupation too small for an immortal being created to resemble God and to live for high eternal things. Even the Greek language, in the name it chose for man, "*anthropos*," expresses the idea of a

being looking upward, and yet how very far from this idea is the character and manhood of men of today!

Personal conceit, however, is not only silly, but it is dangerous. It is the handmaid of sinful companionship, extravagance, worldliness and godlessness in all its forms. It led Absalom to ruin, and it is weaving a silken snare for thousands of young lives today.

Absalom's vanity displayed itself in his equipage and style of living. He got himself chariots and runners to run before him and announce that Absalom was coming. He posed as the foremost prince in all the land, and showed his princeliness by his pompous display. This, too, is one of the perils of modern society, to belong to the smartest set, to have the finest equipage, to make the greatest social impression, to give the finest entertainments, balls and receptions, to have the most showy and expensive mansion and style of living, to have the acquaintanceship of the most notable people, to be the guest or host of kings or queens or princes—all this is the goal to which multitudes to whom God has entrusted beauty, position and wealth, are pressing forward in the silly strife at which angels must blush and smile as they look ahead to the crumbling castles of human pride, to

the corruption and the worm that is so soon to take the place of all the splendid pageant of what men call society. How very sad that on a single ball in our metropolis every winter enough money is often spent to send a thousand missionaries to the field and stud the crown of Christ with ten thousand immortal jewels in the form of redeemed souls.

But still more sad and terrible, Absalom's vanity did not even stop short of the grave itself, for one of the brightest ambitions of his life was to build a splendid monument in the beautiful valley of the Kedron, known as the King's Dale. And there between Mount Olive and Mount Moriah he reared a beautiful structure, which is known to this day as Absalom's Tomb. But true to the irony of fate he never slept in his beautiful sepulcher. His bones were buried in the woods of Ephraim, and his monument remains to this day as a derision and scorn at which every Jew as he passes by pitches a stone as an expression of his contempt and abhorrence. And even this is still repeated among the extravagances and follies of the selfish world. All around us men are spending fortunes on piles of stones that will not make their selfish dust sleep more easily, while the poor and hungry are crying for bread and the heathen are dying without the Gospel.

HIS SELFISHNESS.

II. Absalom was the slave of selfish and worldly ambition. His supreme object was to make for himself a splendid position, and attain the very highest place, even the throne itself. For this he unscrupulously risked everything, and at last lost honor and life. He had become intoxicated with the cup of pride. He had become fascinated with the dream of fame. He had set out in the race which multitudes are running still for earthly power and greatness. It is a very sad and usually hopeless struggle, and even when the prize is won it is not worth its cost. What did Bonaparte get for all his victories but a disappointed ambition, a lonely exile and a death without a single ray of hope? What could be more sad than the dying words of Gambetta, the hero of the French Revolution, who, dying in the highest place that the country could give him, left these sad words, "There is no use denying it, everything is lost." How few of the men that have struggled in our own lifetime for political pre-eminence have got anything out of it to pay them for the cost. The men that triumphed for a time as political bosses were turned out at last by successful rivals, and their very names are soon forgotten. The man

who enters the White House at the beginning of a term amid praise and honor steals out of it at the end with none to do him reverence, having disappointed his political friends and won the derision of his enemies, and even failed perhaps to please himself. These are the apparently successful ones, but what of the myriads who fall in the struggle and lose not only the object of their pursuit but everything else as well as the prize?

God save our young men from the demoralizing and disappointing struggle for political pre-eminence and worldly honor. With all its perils and risks even the strife for wealth is less degrading. No man can be safe in such a contest. He is bound to compromise with evil. He is sure to be associated with ungodly men. He must trample under his feet God's holy day as he holds himself at the bidding of political caucuses and the calls of politicians. Honor, principle and godliness must often be sacrificed, and it will be a great miracle of grace if he shall not miss winning the whole world and at the same time lose his own soul. There is a better ambition. There is a safer hope. There is a nobler aspiration. There are crowns and kingdoms to be won by the sacrifice of self and sin. Let us nobly enter for these high contests and let the world go by.

HIS UNBRIDLED PASSIONS.

III. Absalom was a man of passion. His passion was of two kinds, as it usually is. It manifested itself first in the form of vindictiveness and retaliation, and afterward in a shameless disregard of morality and purity in the sight of all the land. The first outbreak of his overstrained nature was the murder of Amnon, his own half-brother, because of the cruel wrong he had done to Absalom's sister, Tamar. There was something natural and perhaps chivalrous in the indignation of Absalom at this abominable crime, but there was a better way to deal with it. Absalom's course was bloody and treacherous. Let us not forget that the blood we shed will come back to us and demand our own. "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." Violence and self-avenging are altogether wrong, and the high-spirited young men of our day who delight in these things will find in the end that there is a Nemesis of retribution that follows surely the bloody track of the murderer to the bitter end.

But Absalom stooped to deeper depths of indulgence and crime when he openly debauched the very household of his venerable father, and in the sight of all the city

and in the very light of the sun dishonored both himself and his father's name by the most shameful of open excesses. It may be said that he did this thing as an act of policy, and did it at the advice of his crafty counsellor. He did it in order to be detested by David's friends and to alienate them more fully from him. This only makes vice the more abominable when it is used as the handmaid of policy. The saddest thing about the vice of our times is that it has become shameless, too. There are thousands of well-bred and well-educated young men who betray no blush of shame when exposed in the most disgusting orgies of licentiousness. There is a little passing talk, and a slight sensation in the channel of public opinion and a decent protest against it by a portion of the press, perhaps a threatened suit at law, and then it all quietly passes over and the same men are received into society without a blush and claim the hands of pure and gentle girls who would be driven from every social circle if their names were even distantly suspected in similar connections. And yet there are men who, in the popular literature of our times, are trying to excuse the license which is permeating our society as justifiable, and are telling us that God has endowed men with these passions and how can he blame them for acting according to

the nature He has given them. There is no doubt but that the greatest peril of young men today lies in the direction of social immorality and license. How can such young men be safe? The same law that follows the murderer to his doom will pursue the adulterer, not only to his grave, but to the horrors of an eternal retribution. There are great laws in the human soul which bring their own punishment. You may conceal from the public eye your wrong doing, you may hide your shame from man, but there is a phonograph which God has put within your breast which has recorded the story of your crime, and will tell it over again, if not to other ears, to your conscience and memory forever. There is an hour and there is a place where white faces will look into yours and the cursing maledictions of ruined lives will be your tormentors, and you will need no bitterer hell than for God to send you away with the companions of your vices and say to you, "Son, remember." Sometimes these things overtake men in this life, and the iniquity of their heels compasses them about until life becomes intolerable and society is the only door of escape from the horrors of an accusing conscience and a tormented life. Young men, be warned and beware. "Her house leads to the chambers of death and her ways take hold on hell."

A DISLOYAL SON.

IV. Absalom was a disobedient and disloyal son. He cared not for his father's love. No, he plotted against his very life as well as his throne. With cold and heartless indifference he schemed with his evil counsellors for the surest way to secure his life and to ignominiously destroy his kingdom. He was unnatural, ungrateful, unfilial and utterly unfaithful. How could such a young man be safe? God has written the law of the fifth commandment in human nature, and the sons and daughters that dishonor their parents will find themselves pursued to the end of life with a certain retribution. It is said that perhaps the reason that the Chinese nation today has outlived all others is that above all other people they honor parental relation. Be kind and gentle to your father and mother even if they are wrong and treat you wrongly. Meet them in the spirit of filial respect and tenderness. Of course there is a limit. We dare not let them control our conscience in the things of God, but even there you can do it so gently that your example will speak to them more loudly than your words, and God at last will give you the blessing of the fifth commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother ; that thy days may be

long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

A TRAITOR.

V. Absalom was deceitful, false and treacherous. His course was one of deep artifice and studied duplicity. He secured his recall from banishment by the deepest cunning. When he returned he set himself by the arts of flattery to captivate the hearts of the people and to undermine the influence of his father. He sat in the gates of Jerusalem meeting all that were in trouble, listening to their grievances and telling them how he would treat them if he was king until gradually their hearts went after him and he had laid the foundation for his rebellion. How could such a young man be safe? The deceiver sinning against the nature of things. Truth is just reality, just a law of God's order, and the man who sins against it sins against the very law of nature. It must react against him with fatal rebound and destroy him. Truth is essential to morality, and falsehood in every form must end in disappointment, exposure and defeat. Young man, be true. It is not necessary that commercial business should be based upon a tissue of falsehood and misrepresentation.

UNSCRUPULOUS.

Finally, Absalom was unscrupulous, unprincipled and ungodly, and in his own character lay the secret of his ruin. And so, on the other hand, the secret of character is godliness. It is not by natural endowments that we can be true and pure. It is only possible by union with God through the Lord Jesus Christ and by receiving into our hearts that blessed Man who is pre-eminently the pattern for young men and the ideal life for them to live. Not only has He once lived and walked before us as our pattern, but He comes to live again in every true heart that will receive Him, and to lift us up to His own ideal of holy, eternal manhood. Jesus Christ is forever a young man, and He wants to lead young manhood up to the high place where He has risen, our Leader and Head. Oh, let us receive and follow Him!

The contrasted picture of our text presents not only the folly and failure of Absalom, but the beautiful example of David's life. It is the love of the Father's heart who gladly would have died for his ruined son. It is also the picture of a more loving heart, even that heavenly Friend, who not only would have died for us, but has died for every man who will accept His blessed sacrifice. He is pleading with you,

young man, and saying, "Why should you die? Why should you be lost? Even if you have sinned and grieved Him and ruined yourself like Absalom, I have died for thee, and I will teach thee how to live and lift thee up from that self-inflicted misery and make thee to be even as I." Oh, receive Him, and never let Him have to weep over you in heaven as He once wept over Jerusalem, saying, "I would but ye would not." Never let Him have to say for thee, my brother, "Oh, Absalom, my son, my son, why have you let me die for you in vain?"

"Is the young man, Absalom, safe?" Brother, send back the answer, as you close this page, "Yes; he is safe because he is saved through a Saviour's dying love."

THE IDEAL KING.

"He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow. But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands; but the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place" (II. Sam. xxiii. 3-7).

THESE are the last words of David, the backward look at the story of a life. How different life looks in the retrospect and prospect. How the exaggerating hazes and the rose tints disappear in the clear, cold light of life's sterner reality and we see things a little as we shall see them when we look back upon the record from the heights of judgment and in the light of eternity. David had no exaggerated estimate of his own life. Whatever his failures may have been he seems to have

seen them in their true light and significance, and yet he had that God-given faith, which could look over his own failures to the bright and blessed hope of that greater King, of whom he was but the type and the distant foreshadowing. And so, while in one sense it is true that this passage is the discouraging review of an imperfect reign, on the other hand it is just as true that it is the King, who would fulfil more perfectly the ideal that David saw and in whose coming glory David could forget the faults of his imperfect reign and even the sins of his oft-erring life.

DAVID'S IDEAL OF A TRUE KING.

David at least has learned this much of what a king ought to be and he wisely describes the picture of an ideal ruler.

1. He should be just, free and right in all his relationships with his fellowmen and with his subjects.

2. He should be godly, "ruling in the fear of God." He should recognize himself as the representative of the divine King and work in all things under His direction and in His stead. This is the only true impulse of righteousness. It must spring out of heaven and be inspired by the fear and love of God.

3. Beneficence. What a beautiful picture of

a reign of peace, prosperity and blessedness, as the light of the morning, the rising sun, a cloudless sky and the light and warmth of the heavenly sunshine, more bright and beautiful because it comes after the storm; as the "clear shining after rain," while on the disappearing clouds the rainbow spans the heavens and every leaf and flower is flashing like crystal jewels from the myriad drops in their reflected light.

DAVID'S FAILURE TO FILL THIS IDEAL.

"Although my house be not so with God." This little sentence tells us how honestly he realizes his failure to measure up to his own conception of what a king should be. He was the best of Israel's kings and all through the coming generations "his father, David," is held up to each of his successors as a model of a true reign. And yet he felt how far short he had come of God's highest purpose for His theocratic people. His life was overshadowed by many an infirmity, sin and bitter sorrow.

If David was a failure what an awful failure human government must be considered. How fearfully the kings of earth have failed to represent the beneficent government of the heavenly reign. What were the long dynasties of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, but menageries of wild beasts, whom

Daniel well might represent in his prophetic vision as ferocious beasts devouring and destroying in their fierce career of selfishness and violence. How little better the governments of today may be witnessed by the testimony of our own times in the ferocious cruelties tolerated by civilized nations against weak and defenceless natives.

What else may we look for to take the place of earthly despotisms? How much better is a republic? Shall we entrust our popular democracy with the scepter of government? Alas, the money kings of earth today are monopolizing the world's wealth, and the masses and the classes are getting ready for a relentless war of which we constantly hear the mutterings and there is no despotism so heartless and cruel as that of avarice and gold.

Or shall we enthrone culture and crown her with a scepter of government? Alas, the golden age of art and literature is often the bituminous age of vice and license as gross as the days of the Borgias in Italy, or the Cæsars in Rome and Pompeii. Culture without Christianity only gives people greater power for wickedness. Our criminals today are no longer the unlettered classes, but the graduates of universities. Our teachers of irreligion and vice, the men that would legalize suicide, pros-

titution and intemperance and burn up the Bible, are among the most brilliant wits, poets and orators of our time. No, earth needs a stronger, holier king, and she must go from worse to worse until He shall "overturn and overturn and overturn," and at last shall "come whose right it is." And He shall "deliver the poor and needy when he crieth and break in pieces the oppressor. In His days shall the righteous flourish and abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth."

David looked forward from his failures and the failures which he foresaw in prophetic vision in the lives of his successors and in the distant future he beheld a King who "should reign in righteousness," and a Man who should be "as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

CHRIST THE TRUE KING.

1. He was true to David's ideal.

He is just, and ruling in the fear of God, and all the exquisite imagery of this beautiful picture is fulfilled in Him. He is as the light of the morning. He is the Author of truth and light. He brings morning to the dark world. It is a morning without clouds. Its sun shall

no more go down. He shall be to us an everlasting light. And yet it is a light and sunrise that follow the night of darkness and sorrow. It is the "clear shining after rain," and it is all the clearer and brighter because of the rain that went before.

Oh, how sweet it is to have Him enter our hearts and bring the peace of His benignant sway after the long night of our despair, "the clear shining after rain!" Oh, how sweet it will be some day to receive back from the grave our lost ones and to have Him bring light out of our darkness, joy out of our sorrow and crowns out of our crosses! Heaven will be all the sweeter and the brighter because of the grave and the gloom from which we have emerged, even as the "clear shining after rain." Oh, how beautiful it will be for earth to awake to her millennial morning after the night of the tempest which will precede it and the Armageddon battle which will be just before.

His coming will be as the morning after the midnight and the "clear shining after the rain."

The figure also speaks of fruitfulness, "the tender grass springing out of the earth." Oh, the fruits His kingdom brings to us out of trial, the fir tree that comes instead of the

thorn, the myrtle that grows out of the brier, the curse turned into a blessing, the "peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised" by the chastening of our God.

2. This coming King is the antitype of David.

David was His type and He fulfils many characteristics of Israel's first true king. David was born in Bethlehem. So was He. David was despised and rejected of men. So was He. David was anointed of the Lord. So is He, the anointed One. David was persecuted and pursued by his enemies, and for years a king in exile. So He was persecuted and murdered by hostile men, and even today He is still an exiled King waiting for His throne. David was surrounded by a multitude of wretched, outcast and sinful men, attracted to him by the tie of common misery, but true to him in their sorrow and afterwards honored by him as the princes of his realm. So Jesus today is gathering His princes from the ranks of sinners and outcasts and some day they will be the nobility of heaven, washed in the blood of the Lamb, and sitting by His side upon His millennial throne. Then David received his kingdom in sections, first Hebron and then Jerusalem over all Israel. And so our coming King is first to be crowned by the little

flock He shall bring with Him, and then He is to sit down upon the throne of all the world and reign from pole to pole and shore to shore.

3. He was David's Saviour.

"This," he says, "is my salvation." David understood that his Seed and his Offspring was to be his Redeemer, and from the sins of a lifetime he found peace and hope in trusting in the coming Deliverer and accepting Him as his personal Saviour.

4. David had entered into a covenant with the coming King.

"He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." He had got the ear of his Successor and had secured in advance his place and his inheritance in the coming Kingdom. It was a personal covenant. His own name was written there and all his rights and hopes secured beyond the possibility of disappointment or failure, "in all things well ordered and sure."

Beloved, have we this covenant made and secured with the coming King? Have we had an audience with Him in the days of His retirement and settled all the questions of our future in advance? There is a day coming when myriads of angels will surround His throne and it will not be possible to reach His presence and bring your request to His feet, but

you shall go to your "own place" and reap the results of your earthly life.

Before the installment of our President his friends visited him in his retirement and their various requests were presented at leisure in his presence. It would be no easy task now to press through the formalities of even his modest court and claim his costly leisure for any personal need. This is the time to secure our covenant with our King. Let us not rest until our names are written down upon His hands and His heart and upon the seat prepared for us, and the high calling and an immortal service to which He bids us aspire.

5. David's whole heart was in the coming King and kingdom.

"This," he says, "is all my salvation and all my desire." He had invested his being there, and all his hopes were passing upward and onward to the age to come. Life for him was over now. Its praises and its penalties were past. Alas, for him if this were all. But no, his fortune was laid up on high, his inheritance was insured beyond the grave and all his being was reaching forward to that glorious day when his illustrious Son should sit upon His greater throne and he should lay his crown at His feet and hail Him as the Root and

Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star.

Beloved, is our heart in the hope of Christ's return? Are our affections clustered there? Are our ambitions in the skies? Are our investments, our plans, our pursuits all tending to that imminent event? David looked forward to it but knew it was far in the distance. Daniel went to his grave with the words, "Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." We are living on the very threshold of its dawn. Oh, how much more it should mean to us! How we should watch and pray, and work, bending every energy, concentrating every plan and making all our lives subsidiary to this one great and supreme aim, to hasten the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

David knew he had been an unfaithful and sinful man. He could honestly say, "Although my house be not so with God, yet hath He made with me an everlasting covenant." He had accepted the infinite mercy and saving grace of Jesus Christ. He had come as a sinner without merit or claim and he had generously accepted all that God's mercy had so freely to bestow. Oh, there may be some of us today who can say, "'Though my house be not so with God,' my life has been a failure, my

work has been disastrous, I am all wrong and I have nothing to bring but shame"; beloved, come all the same. It is the door of mercy that you are entering. If you deserve it you could only take an angel's place, but because you do not deserve it you can take, through the infinite grace of God and the gift of Jesus Christ, a place as high as that of Jesus Himself. Come although you have to come, saying,

"The mistakes of my life have been many,
The sins of my life have been more,
And I scarce can see for weeping,
But I'll knock at the open door.

"My mistakes His free grace will cover,
My sins He will wash away,
And the feet that tremble and falter
Shall walk through the gates of day."

THE OTHER PICTURE.

On the other hand, how dark the picture of the wicked with which the scene closes! "The sons of Belial shall be to them as thorns thrust away because they cannot be taken with hands and they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place." Live for the world if you will, pursue its ambitions if you choose, be a thorn and bramble if you prefer, but there is a law of spiritual gravitation that leads all at last to their "own place," and if you belong to an-

other world thither shall you tend. The thorns are for flames and are useless for anything else. The soul born of God mounts to God and can be kept nowhere else. It is the law of the fitness of things, it is the law of nature, it is the law of eternity. "He that is holy let him be holy still. He that is righteous let him be righteous still. He that is unrighteous let him be unrighteous still. He that is filthy let him be filthy still. And, behold, I come quickly and my reward is with Me to give every man as his work shall be."

Even so come, Lord Jesus, come. Amen.

SHIMEI'S CURSE

"Behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came forth and cursed still as he came. Then said Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, unto the king. Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. And the king said, What have I done with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so? And David said to Abishai, and to all his servants, Behold my son, which came forth from my bowels, seeketh my life: how much more may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord may look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day" (II. Sam. xvi. 5, 9-12).

THERE are flowers that bloom only in the glaciers of the Alps and the wild sirocco of the Sahara desert. And so there are virtues and graces that only appear in the wintry atmosphere of obloquy, calamity and sorrow. No man can be sure that he knows himself or is proved and tried until he has passed through the experiences of cruel misunderstanding and shameful wrong. The Son of

man was made perfect through sufferings, and in the perfecting of the Christian character patience is the last of the graces. Even charity, the queen of all graces, reaches her maturity in the school of sorrow. The first feature in her portrait is, she "suffereth long," and the last, she "endureth all things."

And so we see the highest qualities of David in the hour of his keenest trials and in the face of the most humiliating experiences. It is one thing to bear the cool treachery of such a son as Absalom. It is another thing, and in some respects a little harder, to endure the taunts and scoffs of a creature like Shimei. There is a sense in which the bite of a sandfly is more annoying than the artillery of a battalion. And so the present subject speaks to our own life in a place which many have found to be intensely irritating and often intensely hard.

THE CURSE OF THE WICKED.

Primarily it is the curse of the devil.

This is his peculiar business. His very name means "accuser." It is natural for him to throw stones, hurl epithets and utter curses. This alone should arm us against his blows. When we know they come from him we need not greatly mind them as they are almost certain to be found unjust and in the end harm-

less. The spirit of fault-finding, sarcasm criticism and calumny are all satanic, and every one who indulges in them is voluntarily wearing the devil's livery.

2. But the devil has some human voices to repeat his curses—the critic, the calumniator, the backbiter, the passionate and profane. These are all of the race of Shimei, and the business is not by any means wound up. No man or woman can pass through life without having to face the detractor and feel the keen wound of the slanderer.

3. It is a comfort to know as Solomon has so well expressed it, "The curse causeless shall not come." Unjust accusations and false calumniators can never harm us in the end.

4. The curse of the wicked almost always comes in the hour of our calamity. It made it doubly hard for David because Shimei took advantage of the darkest hour of his life. It was mean and cowardly. If ever there was a time when common humanity would have looked in respectful silence upon so great a sorrow as his, it was the hour when his own child was seeking his father's life. But this was the time when the cowardly Shimei chose to strike his defenceless king, and add sharpness to the wound which was already stinging him to death.

5. It was made still harder by David's own sensitive conscience, and the sense of his own sin for which God was doubtless chastening him. At such a time it is so easy for the great adversary to inject into our hearts his most cruel poison, and to make our own errors seem darker and more malignant. It is a very dark hour in human life when, with circumstances arrayed against us and calamity overwhelming us with its angry billows on every side, our own heart turns against us, and the devil tries to make us seem worse than we are and to undermine even our confidence in the mercy of God and our very right to call Him our Father. At such a time the curse of the wicked seems to the sensitive and morbid conscience like the very voice of divine judgment, and the great accuser loves to play the part of a divine messenger, and torture us with his reproaches and forebodings.

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH DAVID ENDURED THIS
TRIAL.

1. He saw God in it above the devil and the devil's miserable instrument. "The Lord hath bidden him curse," he said, "let him curse." This is the highest ground that faith can take in the most trying hour. This was the way Joseph was able to look back over his distress-

ing experience. "It was not you," he could say, "but the Lord who sent me before you to preserve life." When we can look over the devil's head and see our blessed Master ruling and overruling we can endure anything that He may permit. God does allow the wicked to assail us and the devil to tempt us. Sometimes it is to make manifest their wickedness and allow them to fill their cup of judgment. Sometimes it is to glorify Christ by our example of patience and gentleness.

2. David overlooked the petty trial of Shimei's cursing in the light of the greater trial of Absalom's crime. "My own son," he said, "is seeking my life, why should I be unduly tried by this trifling nettle that seeks to sting my hand?" Nearly all our troubles would become trifling and seem unworthy of our notice if we looked above them to the greater issues of life. At the very time that we are fretting over some petty wrong there is a graver issue pending that needs our whole attention—perhaps some child or friend in great temptation, danger or sin, perhaps some great peril threatening our life and work, perhaps some duty that we are neglecting in the pursuit of this miserable side issue, perhaps the very crown of our eternal future is being risked while we let the devil pre-occupy us about our reputation,

our rights, or the punishment of some petty slanderer whom we might better leave to God. I have known a minister of the Gospel spend years of his life in hunting down petty adversaries and following up contemptible assaults upon his character while his work suffered continued distraction and finally destruction and he came out in the end as a man always comes out who goes in to fight all the dogs in the street. He may succeed in defeating the dogs but he will bear away scratches to last him for a lifetime and find he has lost his time in the bargain.

That was wise advice that Abraham Lincoln gave to his son. "My boy," he said, "men tell you to be slow to quarrel, but when you do quarrel make your quarrel so strong that you will not need to quarrel again, for your enemy will respect you for life. My boy, do not take their advice. My counsel is, never quarrel. Even if you succeed in your contest you make an enemy and you lose more than you gain." Let us be so pre-occupied with the great issues of life that we shall pass by all these trifling things and with a wide estimate of life's real values shut our eyes to the devil's side shows and treat him and his emissaries with that which he least can stand, silent contempt.

3. David refused to revenge himself. He

would not allow Abishai to cut off Shimei's head as he easily might have done, but he left his cause unvindicated and he committed his case to the hands of his faithful Creator as we are commanded likewise to do.

4. Better still, he even took Shimei's curses as the promise of blessings and said with deep ingenuity and lofty faith, "It may be the Lord will requite me good for his cursing." That is a fine view to take of the devil's unkindness, to ask the Lord to enter a credit in our account and balance the books with a blessing for us in consideration of his curse.

God does requite His children for the devil's cruel blows. He gives them grace and strength through the trial and He makes up to them for every blow by His loving kindness and His faithful providences. A dear friend once remarked to me respecting a child of God who had met with a terrible affliction and borne it with heavenly patience, "It seemed to me that ever afterward her God was trying to make up to her by His goodness for the sorrow that she had borne."

And so God does make up to us now. "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you." And by and by we shall find in the reversion yonder a chain of gold for every chain of iron Satan forged; a crown of glory

for every curse, teardrops transformed into diamonds and thorns and thistles blooming as myrtles in the Paradise of God. So when the devil rages, scolds, strikes and blasphemes let us calmly look up and say, "Lord, remember his wrong and give me judgment against mine adversary."

THE ISSUE OF SHIMEI'S CURSE AND DAVID'S
TRUST.

1. David was vindicated. His trial at length passed away, the sunshine came again, the rebellion was suppressed, the king was restored and the millions of Israel came to pay their homage at his feet and Shimei found himself in the cold minority, an object of contempt and helplessness, obliged even to plead for his own worthless life.

2. Nay, more. The punishment that he so well deserved came at last upon him through his own folly and recklessness. David never lifted his hand to touch him, but when Solomon came to the throne he called him to account for his former wickedness, but gave him perfect immunity while he remained in his own house in Jerusalem. But Shimei broke his parole, disregarded his solemn covenant and one day on a trifling pretext left his home and returned to find himself condemned by his own

folly to the execution that had waited so long for his wicked old head. So if we leave our enemies in the hands of God they will bring upon themselves the judgment of that we would avert from them if we could. Could we only see the sorrow and ruin that await many of those who have often wronged and tried us we would weep with compassion and we would kneel at their feet and implore them to save themselves from retribution and ruin. There are laws of inexorable consequence by which the bitter word which we send forth against another, and the unjust act by which we strike an innocent head, after describing their parabolic course through our mingled lives, come back in the end and strike our own head with all the accumulated force they have gathered on their way. These things can afford to wait, but the issue is as certain as the eternal laws of God. "It shall be done to thee as thou hast done," is the principle that has been inscribed on every page of human history and stands emblazoned on the records of God's providences and pillars of the judgment throne.

3. David also got his blessing as well as Shimei his curse. The best of it was, not the deliverance of David from the calamities that Shimei prophesied, but the fact that this little

chapter could be written with its beautiful story of meekness, Christlikeness and heavenly patience. It gave David an opportunity to be a truer type of Christ and to leave a portrait in the galleries of eternity for which it would have been worth while to live. This, after all, is the greatest meaning of life. Our situations come to us not so much that we may get out of them or get into them but that they may furnish occasions for our exemplifying the Christian spirit. Like the dummies in the shop windows that are there to hold the various wares and robes that are exposed for exhibition and sale, so we are called to show forth the excellencies of Christ before a careless world. Our various circumstances come to us in the providences of God as opportunity for us to exhibit the life of our Master to a world that can only see Him through us. When circumstances smile upon us we are to exhibit the spirit of humble gratitude and unselfish joy. When sorrow comes we are to show a spirit of patience and trust. When others revile and wrong us we are to exhibit the character which David displayed under the circumstances of our text. Everything is to be looked upon as an occasion for testimony and service for our Master. "It shall turn to you for a testimony" was the Master's intimation to His disciples as

they went forth to witness for Him and to be imprisoned and persecuted by their fellowmen. He did not say, "You shall be delivered, you shall be protected," but He said rather, "You shall find the prison a pulpit and the judgment hall an auditorium where you can preach My Gospel and set forth My character before sinful men."

Thus we are making our eternal records and by and by we shall find that God has kept the record correctly and completely, and that while we have been endeavoring to represent Him He has been standing for us weaving our sorrows into chaplets and crowns of eternal recompense.

The little pearl oyster receiving accidentally into its shell a rough fragment of rock or sand tries in vain to expel the intruding and irritant substance and only suffers in the struggle until rasped and bleeding it gives up in agony and helplessness. Then a new force comes into play. From its peculiar physiological system the little mollusk sends forth a crystal fluid which covers and coats the rough piece of rock with a soft crystalline cushion and as this grows and hardens it becomes a beautiful pearl. It ceases to irritate and soothes and rests the wounded side of the little creature until the curse has become a blessing, and some

days later the pearl fisher discovers the hidden treasure, opens the shell and takes forth a gem of purest luster and boundless value which is worn in the coronets of kings and adorns the highest rank and grandest occasions. So some day our sorrows, irritations and wrongs, having first been sweetened by the Holy Spirit into heavenly virtues, will become the jewels of an immortal crown and will shine in the diadem of Jesus and adorn our brow forever.

Don't let us be turned aside by sandflies, barking dogs and biting thorns from the glorious possibilities of a life of sweetness, righteousness and victory, and "a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

THE LAW OF SACRIFICE

"Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen. And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel" (II. Sam. xxiv. 24, 25).

THREE great thoughts are vividly presented and illustrated in the story of this chapter.

SIN.

We have an account of the last great sin of David's life. It was quite different from his former transgression and represented more subtle elements of temptation and disobedience. In the account given in the parallel passage in First Chronicles it is represented as a masterpiece of Satanic subtlety. It was the devil who suggested and instigated it that he might lead David to provoke God and bring upon himself and his kingdom divine judgment.

It was a sin which to the ordinary mind might seem comparatively trifling or, at least,

difficult to weigh in the same balance with the foul crime committed against Uriah. And yet it provoked God's severer judgment. It was the simple act of numbering the people, taking a census of the whole population of his kingdom, especially of the men able to bear arms.

The peculiar element of sin in this act was the spirit of vain glory and self-conscious pride which prompted it. It was really the treacherous departure on David's part from his humble and supreme reliance on Jehovah as the theocratic King and supreme Sovereign and support of the Hebrew monarchy, and a turning to the arm of flesh as well as the spirit of self-complacent pride in his own greatness and glory. It was the same spirit which afterwards manifested itself in the proud boast of Nebuchadnezzar: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the honor of my majesty?" and which brought upon him the swift and terrible blow that sent him for seven years to grovel in insanity among the beasts of the field.

This is one of the gilded sins of human nature whose enormity escapes the self-conceited thought of human ambition and pride. But it is the source of all sin and the very cause of Satan's downfall. Pride is the "snare of the devil," and it seems the idea of Holy Scrip-

ture as well as of the highest human genius, that when Satan looked into the mirror and saw his own beauty and brightness he became intoxicated with holy ambition and pride, and, assuming the place of a god he sank from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell, and has ever since been dragging down all the spirits that he could control by the same subtle temptation.

This was the eventual result which he made upon the innocency of Eve when he appealed to her spiritual pride and said, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Ever since that eventful morning her sons and daughters have been infested with a spirit of a false ambition and a delusive vainglory which has strewn the world with wrecks of ambition, vanity and pride.

This was the subtle snare which Satan prepared for David's latest days. It was the unconscious desire to display the greatness of his kingdom and the strength of his military resources.

Joab, his shrewd commander-in-chief, while a man of no moral or religious principle whatever, was wise enough to know that David's proposal was wrong, and he earnestly tried to dissuade him from it without success, and then reluctantly proceeded to carry out his master's

instructions. The census proceeded for nearly ten months including the whole kingdom except the tribes of Levi and Benjamin and showed an available military force of more than a million and a quarter men.

But the moment the result was announced to David he felt in his inmost soul that he had erred and sinned; and with that deep intuition of a true and tender conscience which was so beautiful a feature of his character when he really saw his fault he humbled himself before God and said, "Oh, Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done. Now, I beseech Thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of Thy servant, for I have done very foolishly." God was pleased to accept his penitence. But, nevertheless, He proceeded to teach him the important lesson rightly imparted to him and to the ages for whom he was living as a great object lesson. Happy for us if we could learn that lesson without having to go through the same sad discipline!

This sin of vanity, self-consciousness and pride is one of the most alarming signs of our public, social and religious life of today. We see it in the proud despots of great nations. We see it in the spirit of brag both in our own and in other lands. We see it in the disgusting and extravagant social display so characteris-

tic of our time. We see it in ecclesiastical and religious ambition. And its subtle snare attends every stage of our religious experience and makes it so easy to seem rather than to do and to turn even our holiest blessings into a dramatic exhibition or a self-conscious display of our own graces or victories or Christian work.

Whenever we become occupied unduly with even the best religious experience, or think or speak in the spirit of pride of the most useful Christian work, we at once obscure it with its own shadow and defile it with the foul odor of carnal pride. Lowliness, whether it be physical, intellectual or spiritual, loses all its charm when it becomes conscious of its own attraction, and modesty is a heavenly veil which covers with divine beauty even the homeliest face and the simplest action. Let us take care as we come near the holiest to veil our faces with our wings and to be so absorbed with God that we shall not know that our faces shine. Let us never forget, as He blesses our work, to hide both it and ourselves under the shadow of His hand, and laying every crown at His blessed feet to say, "Not unto us, O, Lord, not unto us; but unto Thy name be all the glory."

David's great sin was marked by God with the severest chastening. It was chastening

mingled with mercy because David had already seen his fault and knew that God was dealing with him not in judgment but in paternal discipline. It is very sweet to recognize our Father's hand in our sorest trials. It would be terrible to find ourselves in the hands of an angry God. God's disciplinary dealings with His children are always merciful and the tenderest proof of the Father's love. "You only have I known," He says, "of all the inhabitants of the earth, therefore will I chasten you for your iniquity."

We see, in the manner in which David received God's dealings with his sin, a beautiful example of penitence and submission of a believing soul. God gave David his choice of three judgments, either of a destructive famine or defeat in war, or three days of pestilence. David's answer is very instructive. "Let me fall," he says, "into the hands of the Lord and let me not fall into the hands of man." Here lies the difference between the natural heart and the erring child of God. The former wants to get away from God, and the latter wants to fall into His hands and be dealt with by His wisdom and mercy. Here Peter and Judas part. The latter went out from the presence of Christ to despair by his conscience. The former lingered to catch his

Master's look, and was the first to swim to the Galilean shore when Jesus met His disciples after His resurrection.

The hardest part of David's chastening was the suffering it brought upon others, the innocent "sheep," as he called them, who had done no wrong, and yet who suffered the most terrible effects from his transgression. There is no form of trial so severe as that which comes to our innocent and loved ones in consequence of our own disobedience to God. Many a parent whose heart would not be reached by a personal affliction is often broken into penitence and humility by the dying anguish of a beloved child who acts as a messenger of discipline to that parent's heart.

"Smitten friends
Are angels sent on errands full of love.
For us they languish and for us they die.
And shall they languish, shall they die in vain?
Shall we tread under foot their agonizing groans,
Frustrate their anguish and make void their death?"

You may say, if you like, that this is unjust on God's part, but its reason lies in the very nature of things. As well might you say that it was unjust for the branch to wither when the root of the tree is cut. God has interwoven us all together so that one involves many in mutual suffering. A father's intemperance

bequeaths a curse upon his innocent babes. A pastor's fall wrecks the eternal hopes of many who leaned upon his faith and are undermined by his unfaithfulness. Every one of us carries with us the fate of precious souls as surely as the captain carries the lives of his passengers in his hand. David found this out when he saw seventy thousand of Israel's innocent men, women and children lying black with plague and convulsed with agony because of his rash, presumptuous act.

Oh, is God thus dealing with you through another's sorrow? God forbid that your hearts should be so hard as to "let them languish, let them die in vain." Listen to the voice that speaks to you from their pallid brow and expiring breath, and turn to God whose hands have smitten and He will again make you whole. David's heart was crushed by this terrible calamity, and at last unable to endure it longer he cried out in a truly magnanimous spirit as the angel lifted his sword above Jerusalem to destroy it, "Lord, I have sinned and done wickedly, but these sheep, what have they done? Let Thine hand, I pray Thee, be against me and against my father's house."

ATONEMENT AND EXPIATION.

But David's self-sacrifice could not atone for his great sin. He and his father's house, had they all perished, could not have made right the wrong which he had done.

And so God taught him and taught the world through him that greatest lesson of divine revelation which had been enacted so often on the Jewish altars, and which was yet to be accomplished in its reality by the world's Redeemer, that nothing less than the blood of God's own appointed sacrifice could expiate the sins of men. And so the command was given, "Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David built there an altar unto the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the Lord was entreated for the land and the plague was stayed from Israel."

Here, on the very site where Abraham offered up his Isaac ages before as the type of the world's greater sacrifice, and near where Jesus afterwards died, David reared by Divine command a sacrificial altar and offered up victims which were but figures of the Lamb of God who, in ages later, laid down His own life for the sins of men, and thus laid the foundation by which God can be just and the Justifier

of him that believeth in Jesus. This is the greatest truth of divine revelation, and this was the highest lesson which David could learn or teach.

But what his own grief and penitence and sorrow and even his very death could not have done, the blessed Substitute whom God had for ages been preparing was at last to accomplish and thus make an end of sin and bring in everlasting righteousness through His atoning sacrifice and His precious blood. This is the supreme truth which the folly of the world's wisdom is setting aside, making the blood of the covenant a common thing. But this is the only foundation for the sinner's hope and the loftiest themes of the songs of ransomed souls on earth and in the heavens. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Never can this story grow old as long as the human conscience needs that precious blood to efface its sense of sin and dread of judgment.

Every little while we see some illustration of the deep conviction in the human heart that blood must go for blood, and that the man who has outraged, wronged and murdered human virtue and innocence must receive in kind the wrong that he has done. Back of this lies a

true instinct that is part of the nature of things, that sin must be expiated, and that the sin which has had grosser aggravations needs a corresponding satisfaction. Talking lately with one that had greatly sinned, the remark was made, "How can I expect to be so easily forgiven when my fault was so aggravated and shameful?" As I looked up for an answer God gave me such a view of the judgment hall and the cross as I had never seen, and I answered, "Jesus Christ not only suffered death for sinners, but He suffered all the shame and horror, all the insult and ignominy and aggravated sufferings which every form of sin could deserve. He was insulted, abused, outraged and degraded before brutal men because He was standing for those that had outraged, insulted and fiendishly wronged the innocent and helpless, so that these vilest sinners might look back to His sufferings and see in them a substitution for what they deserved." And so Christ is a qualified and complete Saviour for every sort and degree of sin.

This was the vision which God no doubt gave David in that day, and through which David found peace for his great transgression, and had a dying vision of Calvary and Christ such as he had left on record in some of his Messianic Psalms, where we can behold the

dying agony and hear the cries of the Lamb of God as distinctly as if we ourselves were standing under the very shadow of His cross. Oh, beloved, have you had that vision? Has it lifted your burden, quenched your guilt, healed your conscience and given eternal peace and eternal gratitude to your redeemed soul?

SELF-SACRIFICE.

But the sacrifice of Calvary demands from us another sacrifice, not by way of expiation, but by way of grateful love. What right have we to take that precious life as our substitute unless we are willing to give our consecrated lives in loving return, and therefore that sacrificial scene on Mount Moriah has a companion picture in the spirit of self-sacrifice which we see exemplified there, both in Araunah, the princely Jebusite, and in David. As David came to buy the site for the altar, Araunah with princely liberality offered to give both the site and all the accompaniments, oxen, ploughs, implements and everything. "Here be the oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing instruments, and other instruments of the oxen for wood. All these things did Araunah as a king give unto a king." He met the occasion with kingly nobility of spirit, and God paused a moment to pay tribute in the narrative to his nobleness of character.

But David was not to be outdone by Araunah. "Nay," he replied, "but I will surely buy it of thee at a price." There was no petty bickering to get the best of the bargain, but the two men were contending who would be the noblest, and David insisted on giving him his price, uttering as he did this epigram of sacrifice and service, "I will not offer unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing." This is always the spirit produced by a true vision of Calvary. "We thus judge," says the Apostle, "that if One died for all then all died, and He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him that died for them and rose again." The blood of Calvary is fruitful seed in consecrated hearts and lives and reproduces itself in a similar spirit of self-renunciation.

This was really why God chose this spot for David's sacrifice. It was dear to Him because it had been the scene of an earlier sacrifice, where Abraham, as the type of God the Father, gave up his only son in willing sacrifice representing the greater sacrifice of Calvary.

These are things that will live and shine when earth's palaces and thrones have passed away. This is the light of heaven, the light of the coming judgment when the brightest

rewards will be given, not so much for what was done as for what was sacrificed.

Beloved, are you giving God that which costs you nothing? Is there real blood in your consecration? Have you ever shed a tear for Christ, or let go a pleasure that some soul might be saved or some cause might be helped for His dear sake?

God lets these opportunities come to us in life to give us a chance of being like Christ, to help us to crucify our natural life and to lift us into His own likeness. If you have not yet learned this law of sacrifice it is because you have not yet gone out of self into Christ. It is one thing to have the blood of Christ on us. It is another to have the heart of Christ in us. The spirit of sacrifice is too hard for the human heart. It is possible only for Him who has already died for us, and is willing to live in us and teach us how to die with Him and live for Him. The blood of Christ upon your soul will save you from wrath and admit you to heaven; but unless you learn the law of sacrifice, and know Him in this deeper death and life through His own indwelling, you never can join the inner circle of His crowned ones, or know the power of His resurrection, the fellowship of His sufferings and the resurrection from among the dead.

GOD'S COMPENSATIONS

"As for me, I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building. But God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for My name, because thou hast been a man of war and hast shed blood. And He said unto me, Solomon, thy son, he shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him to be my son and I will be his Father" (I. Chron. xxviii. 2, 3, 6, compared with II. Sam. vii. 1-29).

THERE could be no stronger evidence of David's perfect loyalty to Jehovah as the theocratic king of Israel and of his true conception of his high calling as the representative of a divine sovereignty than the fact that as soon as he was established upon his throne his very first thought was to prepare for the removal of the ark to Jerusalem, and a little later for the erection of a splendid house for this sacred memorial of Jehovah's presence and covenant. Feeling quite ashamed of his own palatial residence while the ark of God remained under the shelter of curtain and tent poles, he sent for Nathan, the prophet, and announced to him his high purpose to build a

temple for Jehovah, a house for the ark of the covenant.

Nathan's first impulse was to encourage the king in his lofty intention, and he quickly answered without having consulted God, "Do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee." But a little later, when he had time to listen to Jehovah's counsel, the message was entirely changed and he was sent to David with instructions to say to him that he could not be permitted to build the temple which he had proposed, because his reign had been one of conflict and bloodshed. God accepted the will for the deed and announced to him that his favorite son, Solomon, whose name and reign were to be significant of peace, should be chosen for this high service, and that God would give to David in compensation for the rejection of his proffered service a covenant of blessing for the ages to come and would build him a house and make him the ancestor of a greater Son, who should inherit his throne and become at once his offspring and his Lord. At the same time David was to be permitted to co-operate in this great enterprise and work with all his heart to provide the means and resources for its successful accomplishment afterwards by Solomon, his son.

All this is finely illustrative of several im-

portant principles in God's dealings with His people and several striking features in the character of David, and the whole incident is fraught with most important and spiritual lessons for us in our Christian life and service.

A HIGH AND HOLY PURPOSE.

"See now," exclaims David, "I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." How much this reveals of the deepest heart of the man of God.

How natural it is for us to think of our own houses and dwell either upon their lack or upon their luxury. But David felt quite ashamed to be so comfortably situated while the cause of his Lord seemed exposed to humiliation and reproach, and he longed to do something for the honor of God and for the extension of His kingdom.

God did not lay this upon David by an express command. He loves to have us think about His cause and plan for His glory and honor. How often do we think as David did? What proportion do our personal and family expenses bear to our sacrifices to the cause of our Redeemer? Could we but realize as we sit surrounded by comforts and luxuries the condition of the famishing millions for whom Christ poured out His richest blood and for

whom our affluence and extravagance would purchase eternal salvation! How much ought we to realize the injustice and selfishness of our conduct and the light in which some day we will look upon our misspent lives. What must heaven think of the spectacle of this one city in a Christian land spending more in a single summer for pleasure yachts than all the missionary societies in the world will spend in two years to evangelize the heathen!

The surplus and waste which professing Christians are expending in absolutely needless indulgence, in extra buttons on their gloves, extra furniture in their homes, extra splendor in their equipage, extra houses for their residence in town and country, extra decorations on their churches, extra music in their choirs, these useless, wasteful things alone would be sufficient, if given to God, to evangelize the entire world in a decade of years.

This single question which David asked himself if pressed home to a hundred thousand consciences in Christian America would revolutionize our social life and our aggressive work for the salvation of men. It was the same question that Haggai asked the people of a later age, "Is it time for you O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses and this house lie waste?

Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways. Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little, and when ye brought it home I did blow upon it"—or, I blew it away (margin)—"because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house."

May not this be as truly said today as in the days of Haggai because of our financial panics and commercial depression, but when God does bless His people they spend it for themselves and care not for His suffering cause and the trust which He has committed to their hands to give the Gospel to all mankind. Is God first in all our expenditures and all our thoughts? You may have many debts, but is your first debt always paid and are you careful to see that God gets His part no matter what else may fail? This is the test of loyalty and this is the secret of prosperity and blessing.

A KEEN DISAPPOINTMENT.

God declined David's proffered service. Lovingly and unreservedly was it offered, but God could not accept it, and He sent His servant Nathan to say, "Thou shalt not build an house for Me to dwell in." He said it very tenderly and with many promises of blessing and assurances of appreciation, but David had to relin-

quish his purpose and give up the task on which he had set his loving heart.

And so God sometimes declines our service and refuses the gift which we have proffered. Perhaps you offered your life for missionary service and He has not opened your way. Perhaps you have laid your child upon the altar of the Lord and He has not accepted your gift. Perhaps you have thought of some great project of beneficence or religion and God has held you back. Perhaps you planned some mighty work and threw all the strength of your being into it and God has not prospered it. Your plans have failed, your efforts have come to naught and you can see that it was not of God.

This is a very keen and painful experience, but it is an experience that is essential for the disciple of Christ to thoroughly learn. It is not enough that we are willing and anxious to work for God, but the work itself must be of God. It must be God's man, in God's way, at God's time and according to God's plan. This is one of the deepest deaths that Christians are often called to die. Indeed, our work is unacceptable to God and useless to ourselves and others until it first has been bathed in the blood of Calvary and touched with the sign of crucifixion. It must cease to be our work and thus become His and His alone. We must learn to

acquiesce in God's refusals and to believe where we cannot see that He has something better for us than the work we chose. To do this without losing time and becoming discouraged and morbid requires the very highest manifestation of the grace of God and the spirit of Christ. To learn to wait without fretting, without petulance, without haste, is the perfection of discipline and the best preparation for effectual work. The order of service is, first, tarry, then do.

A GRACIOUS COMPENSATION.

While God declined David's service He gave him the grandest compensation. "Thou shalt not build Me an house, but the Lord shall build thee an house." He turned the tables upon him effectually by saying, "You thought to do something for Me, but, instead, you must consent that I shall do something greater for thee. I am the Sovereign of all worlds and the Lord of all resources. I need not your gifts, but I need those who can accept My gifts and receive My blessings in the magnanimous spirit in which I bestow."

And so God proceeded to give to David a series of covenant promises covering all the future and reaching down to the very throne of His glorious Seed—the great Messiah, who

was to be the Son of David, the King of Israel. The most critical examination of this prophetic chapter (II. Samuel vii.) leaves no doubt that while immediately it refers to Solomon yet ultimately it reaches forward to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. "He shall build an house for My Name and I shall establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be His Father and He shall be My Son." This cannot refer to Solomon primarily because his kingdom was not established forever, but ended in failure. In Hebrews i. 5 it is directly quoted as a Messianic prophecy relating to the Lord Jesus Christ exclusively.

But how can the words in II. Sam. vii. 14 be consistently applied to Christ? "If he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men; but My mercy shall not depart away from him." A critical study of this passage has furnished the answer and shown that it may be correctly translated, "If iniquity be imputed to Him," and we know that iniquity was imputed to the Lord Jesus Christ, for "He was made sin for us who knew no sin," and when so imputed to Him He was "chastened with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men," for "it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and by His stripes we are healed." Still later

in the chapter we reach even a higher point of Messianic fulfillment. In responding to this great promise of the Coming One, David answers, "Who am I, O Lord, and what is my house that Thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God, that Thou hast also spoken of Thy servant's house for a great while to come and of a Man of great estate," as the last clause of this verse may be more correctly interpreted. This Man of great estate of whom God had spoken was no other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so we see for our comfort and instruction that when God refuses our proffered service or our earnest prayer He has for us a compensation as precious as that He gave to David.

In the first place it is a compensation through Christ. It is something in Him which He gives us. It is some deeper revelation, some fuller experience of His grace and love, which is worth all that we could ask or the world could give. Did He keep you back from some cherished plan or take from you some treasure of your affection? Beloved, it was that He might give you Jesus through it in some deeper way, and make up to you with heavenly solace for the loss of earthly blessing.

Then, as in David's case, He gives you something "for a great while to come." He may refuse you some present gratification, but He lays up in store for you some eternal heritage of glory. Oh, if we could extend our vision and take in the far perspective we might be laying up every day some "treasure in the heavens which faileth not," and out of life's disappointments we might be forging eternal gains. Do men wrong us? Let us look up and say, "Lord, lay up for me some word of commendation at the throne." Do earthly fortunes fail us? Let us by the wand of faith transform the curse into a blessing, and take instead the mansions and the thrones which He has promised us by and by.

Sometimes I have seen His children fail to receive even their believing prayers just now, but I have felt that God had answered these very prayers in some substantial form which was to meet them on the other side.

God's bonds are long-time ones, and they all accumulate compound interest, and when the day of maturity comes we shall weep with wonder to see the meaning of His hundredfold.

A WISE SUBSTITUTION.

While God refused the service that David proffered He appointed his son, Solomon, to

perform the task. At the same time He gave a reason for this substitution which is deeply significant. He told David it was not fit for him to build the temple because his reign was associated with conflict and blood, and that the temple was a symbol of the condition of peace and triumph where the battle was already fought and the throne of peace established forever. The symbol of David's reign was the shifting tabernacle of the wilderness, suggestive of change, conflict and trial. The temple, however, was significant of that future age when Christ shall reign in His millennial glory, and sway the scepter of a peaceful empire for a thousand years. Now, Solomon was a true type of all this, and therefore it was his part to build that temple. This will explain why God often refuses to accept some of our services or to bless some of our plans. We are trying to build a temple here and accomplish a work which only belongs to the millennium.

When we set out to have a perfect church and an ideal society, when we expect to close all the saloons, convert all the heathen, put down all the wickedness and have some Utopia of perfect blessedness, we are anticipating the age, we are ahead of the times, we are trying to translate a season of conflict, sin and temptation into a millennium that has not yet dawned,

and God will not bless these plans. Many of us have tried them and failed and come back to the realization that we are not building temples here or accomplishing any form of perfect work. We are simply quarrying stones out in the mountains and hewing timbers for a building that will be erected by and by when Christ Himself shall come and rear a temple for the millennial age. Let us be content to work at the rough materials, to see our ambitions dissolve and fail, and look forward to the "great while to come," which David saw, when all our hopes will be fulfilled and we shall dwell in a "city that hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."

There was another reason suggested for God's refusal of David's proffered service. He intimated that He did not care very much about temples anyhow, and had been perfectly content to wander through the wilderness in shifting tents. What God wants is not splendid architectural palaces, but living temples of holy hearts in which He can dwell and rule. I do not believe a song would cease in heaven if all the splendid Gothic cathedrals in the world would be shaken to pieces by an earthquake tomorrow. God would let them all go rather than have a single saint defile the living temple of the Holy Ghost.

BEAUTIFUL ACQUIESCENCE AND CO-OPERATION
IN GOD'S PLAN.

David not only acquiesced in the divine message, but went to work with all his might to help to accomplish it, and labored as unselfishly for the temple that Solomon should build as if he himself had been intrusted with the entire task. During the remaining years of his reign he collected the prodigious sum of three thousand millions of dollars in money and materials, and gave himself, of his own personal wealth, the magnificent contribution of over eighty millions of dollars for this work.

Nay, further, he devoted himself to prepare a service and ritual for the house of God that should be built with twenty-four corps of ministering priests, two hundred and eighty-eight leaders of song, a choir of four thousand voices, four thousand porters and twenty-four thousand Levites for the other offices of the service of the Lord. All this he left in perfect order for Solomon's administration, and he himself lent his splendid genius and inspired gift of poetry and music, leading sometimes the choral service with his own harp and voice with divine enthusiasm.

Beloved, have we learned to take as much delight in God's work through the hand of

another as when it bears the impress of our own personality? The only way to do this is by seeing no man in it, but recognizing it wholly as the work of God, remembering that the workers are His instruments subject to His authority, summoned and prepared at His sovereign will. No man is ready to say, "Here am I, Lord; send me," until he has first learned to say, "Lord, send by whom Thou wilt send."

Finally, let us learn from the spirit of David the spirit of large-heartedness and magnanimity in the work of God. What a splendid spectacle! A king and a whole kingdom laying themselves out with all their resources to honor God and build a monument for His glory may well put to shame our pretensions of being a loyal Christian nation or even an honest Church of Christ, while we are putting our billions into the enterprises of commerce and the armaments of war, and our paltry pennies are deemed sufficient to supply the resources for the evangelization of the world and the bringing in of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, how small, how shameful, how unworthy the spirit of modern Christianity!

God forgive us and lift up some voice that can penetrate to the selfish ear of trade and strike some blow that will shatter the coffers

of religious selfishness and consecrate their treasures to build, not a temple of material masonry, but a house of spiritual stones of saved and sanctified men and women, a work which will fulfil the loving purpose for which He died and give the knowledge of salvation to all the world that He Himself may come and build that greater temple of the new Jerusalem of which Solomon's splendid edifice was only a transient type.

THE LAND OF CABUL

"And Hiram called the cities which Solomon gave him, the land of Cabul (II. Kings ix. 13).

THIS is a little chapter from the story of Solomon and Hiram; it is also a chapter from the story of many a Christian life. Solomon had given to his friend twenty cities in the land of Galilee in recognition of his kindness in supplying timber and other material for the magnificent temple which had just been erected, but when Hiram went to view the cities he was displeased with them and bitterly disappointed with the gift of his friend, so he called them Cabul, which means displeasing.

There are a good many people still who live in the land of Cabul—the country of discontent—the clime where the sun rarely shines and the birds never sing. Let us look a little at this inhospitable land, so that we can learn some lessons which will lead us to emigrate from it and live rather in the Land of Beulah, where the sun no more goes down and the days of our mourning are ended.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THIS LAND.

There were twenty cities in this country of Cabul. We are not told what their names were, but it will not be hard to guess.

The first of these cities was called Discontent, and the people who lived in it were never pleased with anything they had. They were always comparing it with the pleasures of others and wishing they had something they did not possess.

Near by was the city of Envy, which was located sufficiently high to be able to look over the surrounding country, and the point of view was such as to make every other city look as if it lay in the sunshine, which never came to the dwellers in Envy. Every one else seemed to be better off than they, and as they contemplated the pleasures around them they only made themselves the more miserable.

Another city in the same direction was Covetousness. Its inhabitants were always thinking of the pleasures they did not have and wishing for the blessings of others without trying legitimately to secure them.

One of the largest towns in the Land of Cabul was Unthankfulness. Its inhabitants seemed to think that they were entitled to all that they possessed and never thought of look-

ing to a higher Power and acknowledging His goodness for all they had.

Worry was another town of Cabul. Its people seemed to be always talking about tomorrow, and were constantly making plans against the trials of the future, fortifying themselves against foes which never came and fearing because of the clouds that might come and the obstacles that might intervene. Their fears made their imaginary troubles so real that they were constantly suffering from the troubles that did not come and the worry of others which were never realized.

Despondency was another of these twenty cities. The people who lived in it never smiled, the birds were all ravens and owls, the flowers had no sweet odors and the air was malarial and unpleasant.

There was another city called the Croaking City, situated in a swamp where the frogs could be heard day and night, making the air dismal with their gloomy notes, and the people seemed to talk in a similar tone. Everything was always wrong. The times were always bad, the weather wretched, they themselves were miserable and the prospects were darker still.

On a somewhat elevated plane on this land there was a city called Stoicism, where the

people seemed to have a somewhat better feeling and had made up their minds to endure their miseries and make the best of the bad situation, in other words, to grin and bear it. Among the inhabitants there was a general feeling to endure anything, but there was no life or spring of joy or hope.

It is needless to say that the people of this country of Cabul had the worst kind of health, and therefore nothing exhilarated them. The other blessings that came to them were poisoned by the miasmas that rose from their dismal swamps and were hidden by the clouds that hung over their murky skies. The rivers all ran the wrong way instead of running out and bearing their foul tides away. Everything about this wretched country spoke of selfishness, and the waters of the rivers, borne by the sluggish tide, were left upon the unhealthy shores to breed poison and death. A heavy mist was always hanging over the country, so that the people could not see the sun that was shining right above them, nor the bright and beautiful forests and hills of the happy countries immediately adjacent. Indeed, when they did get a glimpse of these brighter prospects, the air had a peculiar property of discoloring and distorting everything that made it impossible to see anything in its

true colors. It seemed, indeed, a very wretched place to live in, one greatly wonders that it was so thickly populated and why its foolish inhabitants were so slow to fly from its uncongenial shores to the happy regions of peace and gladness, where heavenly messengers were constantly inviting them in vain.

THE GEOLOGY OF THIS COUNTRY.

If we examined the structure of its strata to see how such a wretched country was ever cast up, some interesting things we would find.

1. The bed-rock of Selfishness. Immediately below the surface we would find the soil very hard and impervious. As we examined the rock very carefully we would find that it contained a solid mass of selfishness and understand why the people of Cabul were so unhappy; they were always thinking about themselves; they were always looking at things as they affected their own interest. It is a law of the spiritual world that everything we do for ourselves directly will disappoint us, but everything that we do for others will come back to us again in blessings. This is the very law of God's own being, the law of His love, and arises from the fact that He is always blessing others and living for others. This is the very law of the universe, and whenever we

.disobey it by selfishness we defeat our very object and destroy our very happiness. As long as we are looking at our end of things, they will seem to be all wrong, and we shall have a sad and disappointing time. When we rise out of self altogether and live to bless God and man we shall dwell in the joy of the Lord, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

2. Next was the stratum of Worldliness, right under the bed-rock of selfishness. The people of Cabul were looking at things from an earthly standpoint and depended for their happiness on the things of life rather than on those holy sources which are above all circumstances and things. God has made us for a higher world, and if we seek to feed our spiritual and moral nature on the husks which the swine do eat, we shall certainly die of spiritual dyspepsia. The great apostle could say, "Having nothing and yet possessing all things." And the Master Himself once said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth." Our true life finds its satisfaction in the heart of God and the things unseen.

When Gen. Gordon met the despot of the Nile, who threatened to kill him, Gordon calmly looked into his face and said, "You cannot hurt me or take away my life, for, indeed, you

could not do me a greater favor than to shoot me down, as you threatened to do, for then I would be the more quickly introduced into the presence of my Saviour and my Lord." The Arab was dumfounded. He had never met a man who would defy his worst and could laugh at his most terrible threats, because he did not know anything of God. If you would get out of your misery get out of your earthliness and selfishness and learn to know your heavenly calling and your Saviour's joy.

3. Next we come to the sub-stratum, Pride, on which the Land of Cabul rests, and we find that the misery of its people arose largely from an undue estimate on their part of their rights and deserts at the hand of God. They seemed to think that they had not got what belonged to them and that what they had already was theirs by right, and to forget that they were wretched creatures, deserving only to die, who had only been saved by divine mercy from destruction and ought to realize that the smallest blessing from His hands was a favor far exceeding their deserts, and for which they ought to be profoundly grateful. If we could only see our blessings in the light of our sins we would be grateful for anything. If we could only see that the smallest blessing that we enjoy had to be purchased for us by the

precious blood of our Redeemer we would lead a life of praise.

4. Unbelief is another mass of subterranean rock in this land. Could we regard God in all the circumstances of our life, trust Him through everything, believing in His love no matter what may come, we should look over these things and know that it is His love that sends these trials to test us and prepare us for a higher plane of strength and service. If we could see our Master watching from on high until we overcome in a trying place and smiling with unspeakable delight when we triumph, and turning away with shame when we give up, we would never doubt or fear.

5. Another cause of depression is found in a wrong way of looking at others. There are two ways of seeing people in the trials of our life. There is the misjudging method, which attributes to everything the worst motives, and there is the loving way that always finds some better motive to which to attribute all actions, and a more charitable way of looking at them, thus excusing them and saving us that sense of wrong which hurts us so severely.

6. Wrong motives in our work for God are at the bottom of many of our troubles. Hiram seems to have expected to get a larger

recompense than he got. Had he been doing this work for God he would have been paid by the fact of having the privilege and opportunity to do it. When people do their work for the sake of a salary or for the smiles and applause of men or women, their work will turn to wormwood and their joy to bitterness. Love to God will bring its own reward.

7. The secret of all unhappiness and the foundation of all joy is to be found in this one thing—the presence or absence of Christ in our heart. The one joy that is incorruptible and eternal is the joy of the Lord Himself, dwelling within ourselves, and to abide with Him face to face, this is joy, this is the Land of Beulah and the country of Hephzibah, the land where the sun shall no more go down and the days of our mourning shall be ended.

THE THEOLOGY OF THIS SUBJECT.

What is the practical lesson of this theme?

1. The spirit of gloom keeps us out of Canaan. The beginning of Israel's failure to reach the land of promise was their falling into the sin of murmuring. It was the first backward step and was speedily followed by others which brought on them at last God's tremendous curse, and left the bones of a whole generation to whiten on the Arabian sands. A

spirit of murmuring, discontent and despondency will surely keep us back from a life of communion with God and the power of the Holy Ghost. The first thing in consecration is a complete acquiescence and delight in the will of God, and this is wholly inconsistent with a spirit of discontent, depression and unhappiness.

2. A spirit of unhappiness and discontent will rob us of God's blessing. He loves to bless the happy and thankful heart, and the soul that nurses its wrongs and feeds upon its grievances shall always have sorrow to grieve over.

3. A spirit of cheerfulness and content is our reward. It fills the heart and life with joy and renders existence a continual delight, while a heavy heart, an anxious mind and a gloomy disposition are harder to bear than are the misfortunes, calamities and ills that could befall the most unhappy life. For our own sakes, if for nothing else, let us dwell in the land of gladness and keep free from the dreary shores of Cabul.

4. A spirit of joy is a spirit of power. It attracts others to us. It becomes a bond of sympathy and influence with other lives. "I am as happy as an angel since I became a Christian," was the testimony of the Countess

of Huntingdon, and that testimony led two of the peeresses of England to give their hearts to God, for they said they had found no such happiness in the world. We are to be examples to mankind of the beauty and the glory of a consecrated life, and as they see us they too will say, "Let us go with you, for God is with you."

May the Holy Ghost baptize us with the power of a holy gladness and save us from sorrow as well as sin.

So let our lips and lives express
The Holy Gospel we profess.
So let our words and actions shine
To prove the Doctrine all Divine.

SOLOMON'S CHOICE

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33).

"In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto Thy servant David, my Father, great mercy, according as he walked before Thee in truth, and in righteousness and in uprightness of heart with Thee; and Thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord, my God, Thou hast made Thy servant king instead of David, my father; and I am but a little child, I know not how to go out or come in. And Thy servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou hast chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude. Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad; for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; behold I have done according to thy words. Lo, I

have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days" (I. Kings iii. 5-14).

This passage gives the first keynote of Solomon's inner life. The sacred historian has already given us a picture of his inauguration and the splendors of his throne, but here we get a glimpse of his heart and see the true man who was greater than the kingdom.

RECOGNITION OF GOD IN THE VERY BEGINNING OF HIS REIGN.

His first important act was to go to Gibeon, the seat of the ancient tabernacle and, up to this time, the public place of worship, to offer sacrifice and wait upon God for His message and commission. The journey was made with splendid display, as was usual with Solomon in all he did, and the sacrifices were marked by great magnificence, no less than a thousand victims being offered upon the altar during the days of this great feast. It was intended as an act of public acknowledgement of Jehovah as the true king whom he, like David, his father,

only represented, and God was pleased to accept this act of homage and recognition and to bless the king and his kingdom.

RECOGNITION OF GOD'S GOODNESS TO DAVID AND
TO SOLOMON.

We see, in the language which he uses in respect to his father, David, a recognition of God's goodness to his father, David, and to himself, as the son and successor, and especially of the principles of righteousness and uprightness which God required in the administration of the king. He speaks of God's goodness to him as a great mercy and refers to the fact that this mercy was extended to David as he walked in truth and righteousness and uprightness of heart. These are the true principles which form the foundation of all right government, and Solomon wisely recognized them as the elements of David's prosperity and strength, and as those which must enter into his administration also. No government deserves to be prospered or can expect permanency or blessing which is founded upon injustice or any kind of wrong. We talk about our hard times and our national troubles as the results of political errors and the outworking of financial theories and principles. These things are God's judicial chastenings for the

selfishness of His people. It is because we do not use the blessing He bestows and the means He supplies for the real object which alone is dear to Him, of building up His kingdom and blessing mankind with the Gospel and the Truth, that He takes them away from us and sends distress of nations with perplexity. Solomon himself crystallized this principle into an eternal epigram when he said, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Solomon recognized therefore the necessity of righteousness and uprightness and he traced his throne and the blessing that had brought him to it not to any merit of his own but to the sovereign goodness of the King of kings, his father's God and his.

RECOGNITION OF HIS OWN INSUFFICIENCY AND NOTHINGNESS.

"I," he says, "am but a little child and I know not how to go out or to come in." This is the language of true modesty, and modesty is always a sign of true worth. Alas, it is rare that we hear such language on the part of young men. Youth is usually self-conscious and full of assurance of its own strength and sufficiency, and it has to go through the discipline of suffering and failure before it learns to

take the true place of humility which brings greatness and blessing.

Happily Solomon had learned this lesson. All God's most honored servants have learned it, too. Moses, in the confidence of his early enthusiasm, when he sprang to the front unbidden and slew the Egyptian that oppressed his brother, was not fit for his task. But Moses, shrinking back and saying, "Lord, I cannot speak, send some one else instead of me," was the man that God wanted for this high commission. Jeremiah, the last of Israel's prophets, repeated almost the very words of Solomon as he cried, "Lord, I am but a little child," and Jeremiah became the greatest of the prophets of his country and was recognized as the patron spirit of Jerusalem in her darkest days of sorrow. Paul himself, the leader of the great missionary host, took his name of Paul just because it means "little," and as he grew riper and richer in his high and heavenly life and work he grew downward until he called himself, first, "unworthy to be called an apostle," next, "less than the least of all saints," and, at last, the "chief of sinners." Humility is not self-degradation. It is self-forgetfulness, not counting upon ourselves at all, but looking only unto Jesus as our strength, our wisdom, and our All in All.

SIMPLICITY AND SINGLENES OF HIS PRAYER.

There was but one thing that he asked. He might have asked much more. He might have asked anything he would, for God had given him a mighty option and said, "Ask what thou wilt." And so He comes to us sometimes and tests us through our very prayers. Should He come to you just now with that splendid offer and say, "Ask what thou wilt," what would your answer be? What was the first thing you asked this morning? the last thing you breathed in prayer last night? What is the desire that would spring to your lips if God met you with this unlimited proffer, "Ask what thou wilt?" Solomon's answer was ready. He had but one desire, one prayer, namely, that he might have from God the grace, the strength, the power, the wisdom, to meet the situation in which God had placed him, to be equal to his post, to be God's best in the great trust which had been committed to his hands. He did not ask anything for himself, but all for his high calling and great work. What he wanted was the power to meet God's will and satisfy God's expectation concerning his life.

Surely this is the spirit of a single-hearted life, a life that has been rightly poised in perfect conformity with the will of God. The wisdom which Solomon asked just means the

power to use the right means to bring about the right end. It needs much wisdom to get the right end and aim in life, and then it needs much more to attain it. This is what Solomon asked, that he might rightly understand the great purpose of his being, and then that he might know how to accomplish it. Surely this includes all that is worth living for. Surely this is the burden of Solomon's deepest teachings in the volume that afterwards came from his pen in the collection of his wisest sayings. The burden that runs through it all, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," "The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil." "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding, For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her."

God has left to us a greater promise. He has given us as the Wisdom of God nothing less than the very person of his own dear Son,

the Lord Jesus Christ, "who of God is made unto us Wisdom" and who comes to live in us and work out in our lives the very thought of God for us in all its fulness, blessedness and strength. It is not our wisdom that He gives us. It is not even the abstract quality of a higher sense, but it is a living personal mind, the very mind and thought and heart of Christ within us to lead us and guide us in all His will and work out for us and in us, all His plan. This is the wisdom we may have if we but truly seek Him, and the life thus guided and thus blessed can never fail of reaching God's highest thought and life's highest possibilities. It is this high purpose that saves us from a thousand distractions and complications. It is because we want so many other things that we miss them and the chief thing, too. The greatest blessing that can come to a soul is to only desire God and God's will and glory. It was this that brought Solomon's answer so swiftly to him from heaven. God saw his heart was true and He could afford to bless him not only with what he asked, but with much more besides.

GOD'S ANSWER.

1. He gave to Solomon the thing he asked—wisdom—such as none ever before or none

afterward possessed. And it was not long until he vindicated this wisdom by putting Solomon into situations where it was sorely tested and where it was fully vindicated. Before another sun had set there came to him two women with a question which was surely enough to try the heart of the wisest judge. Both were disputing the ownership of their alleged child, and both seemed to the outward eye to love it with equal fondness. Instinctively did the true test come to the wise king. Commanding a sword to be brought he offered to divide the child in two and give to each a half. It was then that the mother heart shone out in all its strength. "No," she cried, spare the babe and let her have it," and in that surrender she showed herself the mother and won what she had yielded. And so God will bring to you many a test in answer to your prayers. You ask Him for patience and He will immediately put you in a position where you will need great patience, and if you will allow Him He will give it to you. You ask Him for joy and he will put you in a place where all earthly joy will fail you and you shall be thrown upon Him for comfort, peace and victory. You ask Him for love and he will probably test you by the most unloving things on the part of others

and then He will give you His love to triumph over unkindness and wrong. You ask him for wisdom and He will bring you up to a situation so full of perplexities and difficulties as to appall you. But this is just where His wisdom will shine out and you will go through in victory while you cry, "Thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place."

2. But God not only answered Solomon's request, but expressed His peculiar approval of Solomon's spirit and Solomon's prayer. He was delighted with it because of what Solomon had not asked. There is quite as much in what we do not say as what we do say. The silences of our prayers are more eloquent than their words. How God must grow tired of our petulant and peevish repetitions of worry and anxious care and the thousand things we reiterate in His ears about which He knows already and has long ago provided. This is what the Psalmist meant in that beautiful sentence in the thirty-seventh Psalm, "Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him." In the margin it is, "Be silent unto the Lord." Hold your peace, stop your pleading, teasing, feeble complaints and prayers. Your heavenly Father knoweth

that ye have need of all these things, and if you will only think for Him you will find Him thinking much more for you.

But, further, God gave Solomon the very things he had not asked. He said unto him, "I will add unto thee both riches and honor, so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days." So when we cease to think about the temporal needs of this earthly life, God gives them to us with an abundance that we never can know as long as we are anxious and worried concerning them. Indeed, when we cry too much for them we are better without them; but when we care supremely for Him and His kingdom, then they lie lightly in our hands and do not become a snare but only a means of greater blessing and He is pleased to add them to us. This is the very essence of the Master's perfect and lofty teaching in the Sermon on the Mount all summed up in our text, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," or, as it is better expressed by the other evangelists, rather, "Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness." It is the only thing to seek and "all these things shall be added unto you." It is to be noted that the word "added" is used. This looks as though in many cases they might not be given until later in our history, namely, in that mil-

lennial day when the earthly shall be added to the heavenly, and the material shall crown the spiritual inheritance of the saints. This would be true to the type, for Solomon, who was so richly endowed with these outward blessings, was the special type of the millennial age when we shall receive the glory and the hundred fold of every sacrifice and deprivation here.

In conclusion, the story of Solomon's choice speaks to each of us as we stand today in the same place of difficult perplexity or high and holy trust. Each of us, like him, has a kingdom for which we are unequal and insufficient of ourselves. Perhaps it is the kingdom of your own soul, and you feel that you are not wise enough or strong enough to sway the scepter over your thoughts and passions and will. Bring it to Him, as Solomon did, ask Him for but one thing, to make you equal to your post, to glorify Himself in you and enable you as a helpless little child to please Him and accomplish the real purpose of your being and trust Him for all besides, and you will surely find the blessing that Solomon found and the addition which so enriched his life. Perhaps it is the kingdom of your home. Perhaps you are an anxious and troubled mother with many an encompassing difficulty, uncongenial surroundings, poverty, toil, lack of

sympathy and help and a thousand temptations surrounding the path of those you love, until your heart sinks and shrinks, and you cry, "Lord, I know not how to go out or come in. I am but a little child. Oh, give me wisdom. Whatever else you withhold help me to be my best," and God will hear you and bless you and make you a blessing to your household and help to save your loved ones and lead them up to him. Perhaps you are a Christian worker in some place of difficult responsibility, feeling that you are unequal to the obligations that rest upon you and the expectations of those that look to you. Go to Gibeon, bring a simple, single heart, ask for but one thing, that you may please and glorify God and be enabled to do His perfect will, and He that answered Solomon will enable you for all His perfect will, will bless you and make you a blessing, and will add unto you all things. Or, perhaps, you are a young man or woman setting out in life with some new position opening to you, some place of important influence or service, some influential situation, some place of public trust. Oh, do not try to be the architect of your fortune. Like Solomon, begin with God. Hand over your life and all its possibilities to Him and he will take a pride in being your Patron, and seeing you through

and some day rejoicing with you amid the raptures of the glory, because through His grace you have not run in vain nor labored in vain.

GOD'S TEMPLES

"Ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you" (I. Cor. iii. 16).

"And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were not seen in the holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without, and there they are unto this day. There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when the Lord made a covenant with the children of Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt. And it came to pass when the priests were come out of the holy place that the cloud filled the house of the Lord so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" (I. Kings viii. 8-11).

"And the house when it was in building was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (I. Kings vi. 7).

THE first great work of Solomon after the establishment of his throne was to carry out the great commission that had been entrusted to him by David--the erection of the temple. He entered upon this work in the third year of his

reign and completed it in the eleventh, so that it occupied between seven and eight years up to the day of its dedication, which was delayed a few months in order to make it coincide with the Feast of Tabernacles. It was the most stupendous work of his reign and his grandest monument. As a work of unequalled magnificence it might well challenge the wonder of the world, and as an object lesson of spiritual truth it is full of instruction for the Christian's heart. Let us look at it briefly in the first aspect and then more fully in the second.

MATERIALS AND WORKMEN.

Some idea of its vast expense and elaborate workmanship may be formed from the fact that it cost in silver and gold alone four thousand millions of dollars, while the other materials—brass, wood, iron and labor—would aggregate at least half as much more. If we were to combine all the ecclesiastical buildings in this country in one huge cathedral pile they would not cost nearly as much as the single Temple of Solomon.

Eighty thousand workmen were employed in the mountains as hewers of wood, seventy thousand more as carriers, while three thousand three hundred were overseers, and, in addition to this, we read of another levy of thirty

thousand men who went by monthly courses. This vast army of nearly two hundred thousand men were employed for years in this stupendous undertaking.

The stone for its foundation was quarried from beneath the hills on which Jerusalem is built. It was cut in vast masses of rock, some of them nearly forty feet in length and as much as three to four, and even six, feet in breadth, so that it is difficult to understand how these ponderous stones could have been removed and placed in the foundation walls. They were cut so exactly and fitted so perfectly that no mortar or cement was used in the masonry, but they absolutely supported their own weight and the immense structure above them.

The wood employed in the building was cut in the forest of Lebanon. It was cedar, fir, olive and other costly woods, and in some cases sandal wood was imported from India for portions of the building.

The decorations were simple but most costly, and consisted of rich embroideries, figure work in silver and in gold, and gold lining for all the woodwork and all the chambers in the sanctuary. The artistic work was under the direction of Hiram, of Tyre, namesake of the illustrious king of Tyre, who entered into

a treaty with Solomon and gave him such invaluable aid with so free a heart and hand.

THE SITE.

The temple was erected on Mount Moriah, the sacred spot where Abraham offered up Isaac, and where Araunah so generously offered his threshing floor, his oxen and his implements, to sacrifice to the Lord. As a place of loving sacrifice it was especially dear to Jehovah and became the monument of His presence and glory. The naked rock of the summit was selected as the spot for the holy of Holies and the ark of the covenant to rest. The slope below was leveled for the site of the Holy Place and the declivity of the hill was leveled up by costly masonry along the east and south side of the mountain, rising in sheer walls several hundred feet high and the space enclosed in the foundation walls filled up with innumerable arches of stone and interlacing walls to support the superstructure. In addition, vast reservoirs were built here and connected by aqueducts with springs in Bethlehem, by which enormous supplies of water were brought to the city for the temple service and the use of the king and his household.

A large surrounding space of about five hundred by five hundred and fifty feet was

enclosed with a wall of stone and planted with trees as the temple area, and within this on a higher plane the temple itself rose in costly splendor, a shining mass of marble and gold.

FORM AND FURNITURE.

The structure built on this costly site and at such vast expense would not have compared for a moment in imposing proportions with the splendid and colossal temples of Egypt or Babylon. It was not even as large as an ordinary church in one of our modern cities. Its extreme length was ninety feet—less than a city lot—and its breadth was only thirty feet, also about the size of a single town lot or ordinary dwelling. Its height was forty-five feet. The interior was divided into two chambers, one sixty by thirty feet and the other thirty feet square; the first, the Holy Place, and the second, the Holy of Holies. The building was approached by a magnificent porch, thirty by fifteen feet, and said by Josephus to have been very high, much higher than the temple. Two splendid pillars, called Jachin and Boaz, eighteen feet in circumference and thirty feet in height, and molded in the form of a lily, supported the porch.

The temple itself was furnished somewhat as the tabernacle. In the innermost shrine the

ark stood alone in the Holy of Holies under the outstretched wings of cherubim, which were vast symbolic pictures of pure gold fifteen feet high, and their wings spanned seven and a half feet horizontally. The Holy Place had the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, and, instead of the seven golden candlesticks, ten lamps of splendid workmanship. The court in front had an altar as in the tabernacle, and a laver of brass; on the altar was an immense erection fifteen feet high and thirty feet square, where the sacrifices were constantly ascending before the Lord, and the laver was a great brazen sea, no less than fifteen feet in diameter and shining like a polished mirror externally, while the crystal water filled its basin and flowed from the faucets at its foot.

The chambers of the priests were built around the outer walls, but slightly detached from them. All the contents of the temple were similar to the tabernacle, and the order of worship the same, it all being designed to typify Christ and the great principles of redemption.

ERECTION OF THE TEMPLE.

The materials were all prepared completely before they were brought to the site. Every

stone was squared and beveled and fitted for its place. Every piece of timber was hewed, polished and, doubtless, marked and numbered for its precise position in the framework. The timber was floated down the mountain streams to the Mediterranean and then floated in rafts to Joppa and forwarded to Jerusalem. The stones in like manner were quarried in the excavations under the hill and brought to their place ready for erection. The brass work was cast in the Jordan valley north of Jerusalem.

Finally, when the building was ready for erection it was simply put together according to the plan already prepared and the materials fitted to hand, and we read in the beautiful striking description in I. Kings vi. 7: "The house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither, so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building." Silently as a great tree would grow in a forest this mighty edifice arose as if by invisible hands, without the din and roar of the hammer and the workman's tool, and all was simply and silently beautiful as God's great handiwork of creation, as the Winter bursts into the Summer and the vegetation rises from the ground. The beautiful spiritual teaching of this we shall afterwards

see, but the very conception is thrilling, and is finely described in Bishop Heber's familiar lines,

"No sound was heard, no ponderous axe was swung.
Like some tall palm the stately fabric sprung."

THE DEDICATION.

Finally the house was ready and the work was done. There was no undue haste in its dedication, but they calmly waited until the proper season, the Feast of Tabernacles. Then all Israel gathered from the regions of the tribes, from the vast new empire, from the maritime colonies, from land and sea they gathered at Jerusalem for the most magnificent event in their national history. When the appointed day had come Solomon himself, clothed in robes of spotless white and assuming for the time the office of the priest as well as the king, took charge of the inauguration ceremonies accompanied by a great company of priests and vast choirs of singers. With the princes and the people of Israel on every side he stood upon the platform, and after the opening chorus of praise was about to begin the service, when suddenly it was perceived that God Himself had already descended and taken possession of the building, for all the house was filled with a cloud of deepest dark-

ness, and with a thrill of awe and unutterable joy all recognized the awful but glorious symbol of Jehovah's immediate presence. God had come to dedicate His own temple. As soon as he recovered from the deep prostration of this glorious manifestation he proceeded to utter the wonderful prayer of dedication, which seemed inspired of the Holy Ghost and which covered all the future of his people. This was followed by the sacrifice on an enormous scale of no less than twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep, until the altar became too small and the whole court was transformed into a place of sacrifice. Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house, and as the people witnessed the manifest presence and power of God they fell upon their faces and worshiped the Lord, saying, "For He is good, His mercy endureth forever."

The solemn service closed with a personal revelation of God to Solomon, as He had appeared before to him at Gibeon, in which God was pleased to accept his prayer and the house that he had built and to renew His covenant with him and the promise of His blessing so long as he should walk in heavenly obedience.

Henceforth, this building became the center of Israel's national life and worship, and we find the Psalms breathing the most ardent devotion and longing for the house of God in such expressions as this, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life and to inquire in His temple." To them it was the center of their religious affections, associations and hopes. We are permitted to know God more directly, but that was the stepping-stone by which they reached His throne and the mirror through which they saw the reflection of His glory, although, alas, at length they lost the thought of Him in the outward form, and even the very temple had to perish because it stood between them and the Lord Himself.

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE AND PRACTICAL LESSONS

1. It expressed the presence of God with Israel as their covenant God.
2. It was intended to foreshadow the Church, the spiritual house of the future, in which God now dwells through the Holy Ghost.
3. It represented the individual believer as the temple of the Holy Spirit, the house which God values most and in which He loves to

dwell, for "ye are the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you."

4. It was intended to represent the glorified Church. The Tabernacle represented the earthly Church amid the trials and vicissitudes of this wilderness life. The temple represented the triumphant Church, the New Jerusalem above, when the trial and change shall all be passed and Christ in more than Solomon's glory shall come to share with His people the sovereignty of a regenerated world.

For us as individuals, however, the chief lesson is the third, and we may, through the indwelling of Christ in our hearts, anticipate the fourth, and enter even here into something of the fulness of the heavenly state, for we are recognized in the Scriptures as having passed within the veil and dwelling even now in the heavenlies seated with our risen Lord upon the throne.

There are several touching lessons for us as individuals in the inspired reference to Solomon's temple.

(a) There is much suggestive teaching in the beautiful fact that the temple was built without the noise of materials already brought to hand. This is a perfect type of the processes of grace by which we are built up in Christ to be habitations of God through the Spirit.

We do not have to frame and forge our spiritual graces by the blacksmith's hammer and carpenter's tool of struggling effort. All these things are ready made for us in Christ and brought to us by the Holy Spirit for us to put on moment by moment and day by day as we take Him in all His fulness and make real in our experience such precious verses as these:

"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh." "Christ of God is made unto you wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good work, which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." "Of His fulness have we received even grace answering to grace." "For there are given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who hath called us by His glory and virtue." "Wherefore giving all diligence add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance," etc. The teaching of all these passages and many more is most clear and simple, namely, that Christ Himself has provided and laid up for us the grace, the wisdom, the faith, the love, the strength and the courage that we need in each new situation of life, and we have simply to take and use that which is ours by faith for taking, and thus put together

the stones which He has made and grow up into the immeasurable stature of the fulness of Christ.

(b) Again, there is much beautiful teaching in the fact that when the ark was moved into its resting-place in the temple the staves by which it was carried through the wilderness were taken out and were no longer visible to the eyes of the worshipers. The ark had ceased its journeyings and was forever at rest. And so the Psalm triumphantly exclaims, "This is my rest, here will I dwell." Oh, reader, it tells you that you may reach that place where Christ shall fix His dwelling in your heart to leave no more, where the staves of your wandering life shall be withdrawn and He in you and you in Him shall be at home forever.

(c) There was nothing in the ark but the tables of the covenant. Even the pot of manna that had been there before as a memorial of the wilderness life was gone. Even the budding rod of Aaron, which was the reminder of their temptations in the wilderness and, perhaps, also, which was suggestive of the stage of budding and blossoming faith, but not a complete fulfilment, was gone, too. There was nothing there but the white tablets with God's will inscribed upon them, which spoke only of one thing, a heart wholly consecrated and having

one only desire, and that to glorify God and do His will.

Is not this the place to which at least we want to come, where we are not seeking any blessing, where even the pot of manna and the thought of our wilderness needs shall be forgotten, and even Aaron's rod of prayer shall be changed to praise and rest, and our one object shall be, as our Master's only and ever was, to do the Father's will? We cannot even imagine Christ having any anxious care about Himself in any regard. He had but one business and that was to bless God and bless others. Oh, when we get there we shall be saved from all our sorrows, from all our cares, from all our conflicts, and the one deep consciousness of our whole being shall be, "I delight to do Thy will, O God, yea, Thy law is within my heart."

(d) We read once more that when the glory of the Lord filled the house the priests could not stand to minister because the cloud of the "glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." This is the secret of getting rid of self. Get filled with God and then there will be no room for you. Do not try to turn yourself out but take Him in, and sin and self will go in the blessedness and glory of a divine pre-occupation.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

"The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus" (John xii: 21; I. Kings x. 1-10).

THE story of the Queen of Sheba is authenticated by our Lord's direct allusion to it in the New Testament, and in the same passage He clearly intimates that Solomon in this incident of his life was a type of a Greater than he. This is also brought out very clearly in a single phrase in the first verse of the narrative in the ninth chapter of II. Chronicles, where it is said that "when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord she came to prove him with hard questions." That phrase, "concerning the name of the Lord," identifies Solomon with the Lord in her conception, and makes it evident that she thought of him not so much as a wonderful man and a glorious king as being rather the representative of Jehovah, the true theocratic King of Israel. We are to look at this passage, therefore, as typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, both in His present re-

lations to the world, which He has redeemed, and more especially in His future relation, when He shall come again in a glory grander than Solomon ever knew.

This remarkable woman, evidently a princess of enormous wealth in some portion of Arabia, had heard of Solomon's wisdom as well as the splendor of his kingdom, and came with a vast caravan and costly treasure to visit him at Jerusalem and commune with him of all that was in her heart. The gifts that she brought him aggregated more than three millions of dollars in value, and the spices were superior to anything which ever again was known in Israel. She was royally welcomed and received into Solomon's most intimate confidence and fellowship and sent back with a heart fully satisfied and her own gifts all returned, while the king added much more of his own royal bounty.

This picture represents the cry of the nations after God. Her longing to meet this wonderful man was just the expression of her deep desire to find some one that could meet the needs of her heart and satisfy the doubts and perplexities of her troubled and burdened mind. The world's cry is, like the Greeks of old, "We would see Jesus." It does not know that this is its cry, but it is all the same. In

the blind idolatries and stupid superstitions of the heathen world we see many groping after God according to the best light and truest conception they know. It is not true that the heathen are ready to welcome the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but it is true that their hearts are earnestly seeking for something which Christ alone can satisfy. Let us send the true light and it will awaken a response in every true heart.

Again, she represented the individual seeking God and coming to Him with his hard questions and consecrated offerings. Doubtless, also, she represents that grander scene which the millennial ages are to unfold when her people and all the nations of the earth shall come as she came to Jerusalem to visit not Solomon but the greater King, to lay their tribute at the feet of the King of kings and the Lord of lords. This was the vision that Isaiah saw down the distant future, and of which he wrote so often in glowing characters, "These shall come from the north and these from the west and these from the land of Sinim. Lift up thine eyes round about and see all that gather themselves together, that come to thee. Thy sons shall come from afar and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of

Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and incense and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord."

WHAT SHE BROUGHT.

She did not come emptyhanded but she brought an offering to the great king. She brought the best she had. Her costly treasures of gold and more precious spices express the finer figures of the heart's devotion and love. It may seem strange that she should bring such a costly gift to one who did not need it, for he was richer far than she. But that is just the reason God asks our gifts. He does not go begging for help for His cause because He is in distress, but He tells us that all the fowls of the mountain are His, the cattle upon a thousand hills and all the gold of earth's mines, and that He asks our offerings not for His sake, but for ours, that we may be kingly, too, and like Him in our largeness of heart and fellowship of service. He gives us the privilege of taking part with Him in the work of these momentous days. Some day we shall understand what a privilege and honor it was. We are to bring Him our gifts as the recognition of His sovereignty and our trust and love, and He, like Solomon, will show His character by giving back to us more than we brought. You

may talk of sentimental piety and keep your money to yourself, but the truth is, God knows and you know, also, that you mean it just to the extent to which you are willing to pay for it and sacrifice for it. The test of love forever must be action and sacrifice. Jesus asks something of us, nay, He asks everything of us as a guarantee that we mean it with all our hearts and then He treats us on the same principle and gives us all that He has. When the woman of Samaria met the Lord He asked something of her before He blessed and saved her. He required her to give Him a draught of water and He gave her in return an ocean of living water. The highest spiritual experience is not to receive merely, but it is to give. "My Beloved is mine," is not so deep a place of holy blessing as to be able to add, "My Beloved is mine and I am His." The very height of rapture is the single utterance of entire surrender, "I am my Beloved's."

WHAT SHE SOUGHT.

I. She sought light upon her hard questions. There were many things that she longed to know. Doubtless she asked him about that great God whose name was written upon the spangled skies of her southern home but whose nature was unknown to her. Doubtless she

asked him about herself and her strangely confused condition, the perplexities of her struggling soul, how to satisfy her accusing conscience, how to resist her fierce temptations, how to be right, how to be happy, and, doubtless, she asked him about the great future, the destiny of the soul and the hopes and fears that look out upon the eternal future; all this which has perplexed the ages, no doubt was brought to him for the searching light of truth and wisdom from above. We, too, have our hard questions to bring to Christ and we need keep nothing back, for He has said that we may tell Him of all our cares, perplexities and sorrows and that He will never send us away unblessed.

2. She sought Solomon's own personal acquaintance and fellowship. It was not merely truth that she wanted to know, but she wanted to meet a living heart that had made all this truth real and proved all these hard questions in the ordeal of life. And so it is not so much knowledge and light we need as it is Jesus Himself. The heart is reaching out for a Person, One strong enough and wise enough for us to lean all our weight upon and One tender and true enough for us to feel we may come and open our heart with all its wounds and even with all its sin. This she found in Solomon and this we find in Jesus Christ.

WHAT SHE SAW.

1. She saw Solomon's wonderful wisdom and personal work and glory. It was Solomon himself that impressed her most. The marginal reading gives a fine sense to her tribute. "Behold," she says, "thou hast added wisdom and goodness to the fame which I heard." It was his wisdom and goodness that impressed her most. To her he represented the character of God and helped her to understand that greater Being in whose bosom the heart finds its resting place.

2. She was struck with the house that he had built. The temple was finished, and with its massive columns, its splendid marbles, its glittering pinnacles of burnished gold and its priceless treasures of interior adornment, it was the most wonderful building in the world. But, doubtless, Solomon explained to her in all its minuteness of detail the higher meaning of the interior, the deep significance of that altar of burnt offering, that laver of cleansing, that lamp of celestial light, that table significant of the Living Bread, that sweet incense that spoke of the very breath of heaven, and that innermost shrine where God looked out from the Shekinah flame with His loving eye from between the cherubim. As all this had open-

ed upon her spiritual vision and had lifted her up to God, that wonderful house became the symbol of all sacred truth and the type of that glorious spiritual edifice, the Church of the living God, the company of all the holy, the body and bride of the Lamb, the next most wonderful thing in the universe after God Himself, namely, God's people. Some day we shall be part of it and then we shall not wonder that Christ died for this glorious Church.

3. The meat of his table next impressed her. The ample and immense provision which Solomon provided for the food of his household—twenty oxen and one hundred and twenty sheep every day, besides innumerable other sources of supplies, made up the larder of his palace. But it may have spoken to her, and certainly it speaks to us, of that heavenly table where our God provides the richer supplies of His grace for His household, living Bread hewn from the rock, refreshing wine, the very life and love of Jesus, who gives us His flesh to eat and His heart to nourish our spiritual and physical need and make us partakers of His glorious life and members of His body, His flesh and His bone.

4. The sitting of his servants impressed her. The first thing she noticed about them was that they were sitting. They were resting and

waiting for orders. How it speaks to us of the true posture, where service must begin. Sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear His word and to be filled with the Spirit, to be commissioned for His service and to be broken into yieldingness and nothingness that He may use us and we may not hinder.

5. The standing of his servants was the next thing she noticed. It is not only necessary for us to sit at the feet of Jesus but to stand waiting to do the commands of Jesus. This expresses the attitude of readiness with girded loins and attentive ear to catch the first whisper of His will.

6. His cupbearers. These represented a still higher service. They are the men who waited on the king himself, and they suggest the sort of service which is not for men, but for God, which is not what the world would call usefulness, but which is the direct, personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Himself which He requires at our hand. He has a right to exclusive love. He has needs which His people's hearts alone can fill. There are prayers and songs which should be poured into His ears, not to bring back the supply of some selfish want, but to manifest to Him some sweet sense of His children's love, some cup of wine from the chalice of an overflowing heart.

7. The ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord was one of the things she saw. To her it spoke of that higher life which was the real glory of Solomon's character and reign. It is to tell us of the resurrection and ascension of our glorious Lord and of our partnership with Him in the throne life where He sits at the Father's side in our name and as our Head. Perhaps she did not understand all these things as we do, but she saw something of their deeper meaning and she felt more. Her heart was lifted up to a new world of peace and hope and joy and henceforth life had an upper passage to her by which she, too, could ascend to the house of the Lord and live in the higher planes of heavenly communion and eternal hope.

WHAT SHE GOT.

1. She got the answer to all her hard questions. She got the light she needed. She got the direction which made her pathway plain. She got the rest which quieted her troubled heart and led her forth into the ways of peace. So will you receive at His blessed feet the light, the truth, and the peace that you so sorely need, and you shall go forth singing:

"I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad.

I found in Him a resting place
And He has made me glad.
I came to Jesus and I found
In Him my shield, my sun,
And in that light of life I'll walk
Till traveling days are done."

2. She got back all that she gave to Solomon. He returned all her costly gifts, not in such a way as to hurt her sensitiveness, fully appreciating the love that prompted it, but in the generosity of his heart he refused to let her lose what she had so lovingly given. This is the way God loves to test us, first to take all that we have and then give back in some better way what we so willingly resigned.

3. She got, besides all this, Solomon's own royal bounty. He gave her a present from his kingly treasures, which was certainly not less than the one she brought up, as much as she esteemed him greater than herself. And so she went back partaker of the king's riches as well as the possessor of her own. Thus we gain by giving. Thus we possess twice over by letting go. Thus we slowly learn the folly of driving a close bargain with our God and the blessing of being whole-hearted, especially with our consecration.

We must remember in order to fully understand the typical lesson that Christ has not yet

fulfilled all the meaning of the Solomonic type. It reaches forward into the age to come. It is then that we shall have the added things in all their fulness and understand the hundred-fold which He has promised and all the glory of our inheritance in full partnership with Him as our exalted King and blessed Bridegroom.

WHAT SHE SAID.

Her testimony was beautiful and simple.

1. She bore testimony to the word which she had heard and said it was true. So should our lives witness to God's Word.

2. She bore testimony that it was less than the truth. "The half," she said, was not told. So should our lives not only fill out, but amplify, adorn and expand God's Word. His Word is the skeleton and we are to fill it out with real flesh and blood until it becomes an attraction and an inspiration to the world, which sees its interpretation in our lives.

3. She bore witness to Solomon's servants and attendants. She had as many good words to say about them as she had about Solomon. And so our testimony should be as bright and as cheerful about the people of God as it is about Christ. And yet how much we hear of the faults of Christians. If the world were to judge God's people by what you say about

them it is very doubtful that they would want to be in such company. Beloved, are you talking about Christ's servants as you talk about Christ? What kind of a testimony are you giving? What kind of an impression are you reflecting upon the world? Are you leading them to say, "We will go with you for we have heard that the Lord is with you"?

4. She bore testimony to Solomon, and this high testimony, that he himself was more than his surroundings. This is the greatest thought in connection with Christian life and testimony and in connection with their Christian character—the man should be greater than his work and his surroundings. This was true of Solomon. As splendid as his surroundings were, his own personal qualities transcended all his greatness, and his surroundings were but a fit setting for the jewel of his personal character. When the late Queen of England stood in the center of a pageant assembled from all the world to pay honor to her on the sixtieth anniversary of her coronation, the highest testimony on that occasion, and the testimony that was repeated in all languages and by representatives of all nations, was this; that the woman was greater than the queen and that her personal worth was the truest glory of her reign. This is true of our blessed King, the Lord Je-

sus Christ. It is not His gifts, but it is His heart that makes Him the love and pride of heaven, and this should be the aim of the child of God. It is not the place you want but the personality that will claim the highest place. It is not things you need, but personal qualities that will lift you above all things and bring all things to pay tribute to you. God lead us to Christ Himself, who is the center of Christianity, and with Him incarnate in our lives let us be living embodiments of the Christianity we profess, and commendations of the Gospel which we preach.

SOLOMON'S FALL AND ITS LESSONS

"And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded" (I. Kings xi. 9, 10).

LIKE some splendid ruin reminding us of the stately temple that once stood there, like some glorious sunrise ending in lurid tempests, like some noble ship sailing away amid waving pennants and cheering multitudes and then disappearing in mid ocean and leaving no trace behind; so Solomon's career became darkened with the deepest shadows as it neared its close, and ended at last in awful mystery. No man, perhaps, would dare to say that Solomon was lost; but no man may affirm that Solomon was saved. Like a ship that founders in mid ocean he sank out of sight in the impenetrable darkness of apostasy and divine judgment.

All through the ages God has been looking for some one to meet His expectation and satis-

fy His ideal of a true man, but the race has always failed him. Adam stepped upon the scene encompassed with every proof of God's goodness, love and care, but e'er the sun had fairly risen the light went out in the dark eclipse of sin and ruin for the race. Abraham was chosen to be the peculiar type of faith, but Abraham failed in the place where he should have been strongest and left the old human blot upon his imperfect record. Moses led forth a new election of redeemed and chosen people from bondage to freedom, and was honored to stand in the innermost presence of Jehovah face to face; but Moses failed in the very quality for which he was most remarkable and broke his own law, and so failed to win his inheritance in the land of promise. David, the man after God's own heart, the very type of Jesus Christ, the anointed King, David stooped to the depths of a double crime and covered the closing years of his reign with clouds of domestic and national calamity.

And now Solomon, the glorious, the man who seemed above all other men to have reached the climax of human character and success, good and wise, successful and prosperous, enjoying the smile of heaven and the honor and admiration of the whole world, Solomon at last became the most stupendous fail-

ure of the human race and closed his career in a mystery of sin, sorrow and utter failure, and left the heritage of strife, misfortune and judgment to the nation he had governed until in the lapse of centuries nine-tenths of that nation were exterminated, and the remaining tribes were driven from their land and left in sad humiliating captivity, the temple that he had reared a heap of smouldering ashes, and the city that he had glorified a derision and condemned in the hands of his heathen foes. He was allowed to be the true type of the Son of man, earth's true King, and then the picture was shivered into fragments and thrown away that we might know that it was only a transient picture, and that the best of men were only men, and the only ideal that can ever satisfy God or meet the needs of man is the divine Man, the blessed One, of whom all these were but broken images and imperfect types. What are some of the lessons that this sad story is fitted to teach?

FAILURE OF WISDOM.

I. The insufficiency of human wisdom and culture to save the race. Solomon was the wisest man, and one of the best of men; but Solomon failed, and the wisest and best will fail. The world is purchasing culture today

but the golden age of art and literature has usually been an age of moral corruption and shameless sin. The worst elements in the heathen nations today are those who have had a touch of our civilization without the power of divine grace. The more you educate men the more power you give them for mischief. It is not culture the world needs, but Christ. It is not even character the world needs, not even moral training, good examples, rigid discipline, self-improvement and higher standards of our virtue. All these will fail. There never was a higher standard than that of God's ancient law. There never was a stricter discipline than that of the Old Testament and God's rigid dealings with his chosen people. But they all failed. The only hope for the race is a new and heaven-born life, nay, more, the indwelling of the divine Person in the human nature, the union of Christ with our fallen life and the re-living His life in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Looking out upon the wreck of his race with a broken heart Ezekiel saw the picture of the past, and his one hope for the future was this: "A new heart will I put within you, and I will give you an heart of flesh." But even that was not enough, for he adds: "I will put My Spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My

judgments and do them." If ever wisdom and personal worth could save mankind, the experiment was truly tried in Solomon, and the lesson ended in their desperate failure.

THE CURSE OF PRIDE.

II. One of the deepest sources of Solomon's failure was the spirit of pride and the love of display which were strongly marked in his life and formed the predominant tendency of his nature. His life was one constant pageant. His ambition was to surround his throne with unparalleled magnificence. His every movement was a triumphal procession. Robed in garments of white, superbly decorated and magnificently equipped with a stud of thousands of horses, splendid chariots and horsemen, and in all the display of oriental magnificence, he went from place to place in a blaze of glory. He lived in an atmosphere of luxury. Every vessel in his household was of purest gold. He was surrounded with the dazzling beauty of a thousand queens, and innumerable courtiers waited upon him and them and brought the homage of all nations to his feet.

Alas, we see the same spirit today in the love of luxury and social pre-eminence which is abroad among our people. The competitions of society for ascendancy and lavish display in

entertainment, equipage and palatial residences are even vying with the magnificence and extravagance of Europe and striving to outshine them. It is a sad and shameful picture. It only brought to Solomon vanity and vexation of spirit; and its end in our age will be financial distress, social corruption, national wickedness, spiritual ruin, a shadow as deep and dark as that in which Solomon passed from the resplendent stage of his fatal career.

FAILURE OF WEALTH.

The love and pursuit of wealth was another of Solomon's snares. He was the richest man of his age. His commercial enterprises were stupendous and successful. His income from them brought him millions every year. If money could make a life happy and successful he had all that it could claim. Alas, he was one of the many whom God has entrusted with great riches to show how little He values them. The other day the multimillionaire of London and Cape Town leaped into the sea in despair to escape the toils and torments of a hundred millions. Today millions of souls are lost through the snares and temptations that come to them through boundless wealth. Money will be a blessing if we hold it as a trust; but it will sink us in the depths of ruin if we ever allow

ourselves to own it or prize it. If we give it to Him and only for Him He may trust us with it in boundless measure; but once it gets its heartless grip upon our souls it will drag us down to a grave as dark as Solomon's. How solemn is the warning of the faithful apostle, "The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." That is the certain result of coveting after money, hankering for it, and setting the heart upon it even moderately. But there is another and more terrible sentence in that paragraph describing another class of men, "They that will be rich." These are not the people that hanker after gold, but they are the people that determine at any cost to be rich. For them there is a shorter career and a quicker descent. "They fall into temptation and snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Beloved, if God has saved you from this snare, be careful how you ever tamper with it again.

SELFISHNESS

Selfishness was one of the banes of Solomon's life. He allowed himself to become the end of not only his own existence, but of his

people's. Everything was made tributary to his power, greatness and success. Seventy thousand citizens were drafted into labor gangs which toiled in the quarries and lumber camps to supply the material for his extensive buildings and extravagant undertakings. Thousands of servants waited upon him, and whole trains of sheep and cattle and all sorts of animals were brought into his palace to administer every luxury to his table. For a while the people bore the cost of this splendid entertainment, but, after a while, they groaned under the yoke of enormous taxation, and eventually they rose against the oppression and spurned the hand that inaugurated it. Rehoboam rightly described the persecution under Solomon's reign when he said, "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. My father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke."

A selfish life will always be an unhappy and unsuccessful life. While you are the center of your life plan and the end to which all things are made to converge you will find yourself openly defied and disappointed. It is the law of heaven that he that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life, for the sake of Christ and others, will find it. Selfishness is the essence of Satan; love is the center

of God's life and God's government, and love is the opposite of self. It, therefore, must be true that the man who lives for self is the enemy of God, and all the forces of God's government are against him. If you love your friends because they minister to your pleasure, if you pursue your love in order that you may reap the joy, if you hold your money for your own will and gratification, if you even do your Christian work for your own honor and reputation, you shall find your life will turn against you, will get out of adjustment and end in disaster. You are putting the pyramid on the wrong end and it cannot stand. We are all naturally wound around ourselves like a watch spring around its center. We need to be unwound and then fastened around God. We are naturally introverted and we need to be turned upside down and inside out, and de-centered and re-centered. Alas for Solomon! He lived for himself and he lived to find that all was lost.

FLESHLY LUST

Alas, there was a deeper depth of sin and folly. Solomon is an example of the curse of sensuality and earthly indulgence. It was partly through his pride and love of display that he surrounded himself with the rank and beauty of the world and maintained a harem of

a thousand fair women from all the courts of the surrounding nations. But it was also an exhibition of the grossest self-indulgence, and the coarse unbridled passion which has so often degraded the thrones and palaces of earth into beastly menageries, and brought upon mankind the curse of Sodom and Gomorrah. Alas, it is, perhaps, the strongest and most perilous social current of our own time; and, like a fetid torrent from the sewers of the pit, it is sweeping through the social life of our own land and our own time, with a breath of license and a depth of wickedness which but too surely remind us that that fearful sign of the end, "as it was in the days of Sodom," is at last upon us.

You may gild this sin with all the beauty of Solomon's court, you may keep it out of the low level of the street and the slums, you may hide it under the subterfuges of your deceitful social system, but it will ever prove, as it ever has, the most subtle, the most swift, the most certain highway to the lowest hell. Oh, let the young, the reckless, the tempted, ponder the awful words which this man has left us out of the bitterness of his own experience: "Her house inclineth unto death and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life."

"The dead are there and her guests are in the depths of hell."

THE WORLD

Disobedience to God's law respecting marriage with the heathen and separation from the world had much to do with Solomon's fall. God had strictly forbidden ancient Israel to mingle with the surrounding nations in social life, and especially marriage; and He has forbidden us to be "unequally yoked together with unbelievers." Any man or woman who dares to disobey this divine command must take the consequences, an unhappy life and perhaps a lost eternity.

A spirit of easy compromise and unholy yielding to the influence of others, especially of his heathen wives, was another cause of Solomon's sin. It was bad enough to marry them and bring them into the heart of a holy nation. It was much worse to allow them to practice the heathen rites of their idolatrous religions with his consent. It was intolerable when he went so far as to erect costly temples for them for their abominable rites on the very brow of Olivet and overlooking the temple itself, for we are expressly told that he built a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and the other of

Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon. Right there in full view of the holy city were these monuments of cruel superstition which God had denounced in the most terrible terms; and in the fiery arms of the burning idol the little children were offered in living sacrifice while their cries were drowned by the rude song of heathen music before the holy nation who had been taught for centuries to beware of these hideous rites. No wonder they called that hill the Mount of Offence.

But this was not the worst. It was but one step more for him to join in these infamous idolatries and to yield to the pleadings of the wives he loved and throw himself without reserve into their abominable excesses. Alas, it has been well said:

“Vice is a monster of such horrid mien
That to be hated needs but to be seen;
But seen too often familiar grows its face,
And first we fear, then pity, then embrace.”

SIN

All this was heightened and aggravated by the fact that Solomon sank into these depths of sin after he had known the Lord, and, as the sacred record expresses it, after the Lord had appeared unto him twice.

How solemnly it reminds us of the peril of

backsliding after we have received the deeper life of Christ, and the second blessing of the Holy Ghost. It was very sad when Israel went back after they were saved from Egypt, but it was more sad and terrible when they apostatized after they had won the land of Canaan. "Let us therefore take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." Let us fear lest we too should become, like Solomon, beacons, useful only in the awful warning which our lives will hold forth to others. Let us shun the dangers which led him into sin and folly. Let us especially make sure to claim that which he missed, the utter surrender of our life from the world and self and sin and the indwelling life of God who is, through the Holy Ghost, within us.

And, finally, let us "take heed, and beware of covetousness," and the love of the world. Never shall I forget a picture which comes back to me from early ministry: a beautiful young woman with whom and her husband my life was thrown for some months in somewhat intimate acquaintance at the time when God first blessed me with the Holy Spirit. She was much laid upon my heart in prayer and personal effort for her salvation, but she met all my approaches with the hard and heartless impulse of a worldling. Often she used to say to me, "I

love the world. I revel in it. I delight in the dance, in the horse race, in the theater. I have no sympathy with your narrow notions and Puritanical ideas. I just idolize the world." One day I said to her: "My dear sister, some day you will hate the world as much as you love it now." She laughed me to scorn, but I prayed on. In a few weeks I noticed her spirit had changed. She seemed to grow depressed, bitter and cynical. One day when we were talking, she said to me, "Oh, I just hate the world," and her lips were set with the bitterness of a cynic. I reminded her of how she loved it once, and she broke out with bitter invectives and told me how everything had failed her, deceived her and how she wished she could fly from it. I tried to tell her of a better world and of a joy that would fill her heart, but her heart had been poisoned by the bane of Solomon, and she left me with the bitterness of the wormwood and gall. Next morning I was startled by an early call, and as I went to my door a messenger with pale face asked me to come down quickly. I hastened to obey and to my horror when I reached the parlor, under the white sheet lay the lifeless body of that wretched society woman. She had just been dragged from the river into which she had plunged in the darkness of night—a soul sickened of earth

but unfit for heaven. As I stood beside that coffin and tried to perform the service of that funeral, it seemed to me that I was looking at a lost eternity, and I heard, like a whisper, the solemn message: "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

SOLOMON, A TYPE OF CHRIST

"And Solomon reigned over all the kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore. And there came of all the people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth which had heard of his wisdom."

"Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred three score and six talents of gold. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance" (I. Kings x. 14, 27).

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall be their blood

in his sight. And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised" (Ps. lxxii. 8-15).

THESE two passages describe respectively the glory of Solomon's kingdom and the greater glory of his greater Antitype. While there will always be a few hero worshippers, yet the world cares not for men and we soon weary of the noblest ideal and long for some one more glorious and true, because man at his best estate is only man. All the lives that have lived above the ordinary plane have been but types of the only Man who can ever satisfy God or meet the needs of men, the glorious Son of man who has once lived for us an ideal human life and who is coming back again as the world's true King and blessed hope. Therefore we pass quickly from Solomon to Christ, from the son of peace to the Prince of Peace, whose coming glory was so grandly foreshadowed by Solomon's reign.

In truth, it required the united lives of David and Solomon to furnish a perfect foreshadowing of our coming King and His millennial reign. David represented rather the militant aspect and Solomon the glorious and ultimate character of Christ's promised kingdom. The former represents the conflict which Christ is

waging today against His foes; the latter the peaceful and world-wide years during which He shall sit with His saints upon His millennial throne and sway the scepter of peace the world around.

HIS BIRTH

Solomon's birth and its attendant circumstances were strongly suggestive of the gracious character and purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ our coming King. Solomon's birth was the most emphatic expression of God's mercy to David. He was born of Bathsheba after David's monstrous crime and the fact that God should choose the fruit of that union, after it became legitimate, to sit on Israel's throne at the most glorious crisis of her history, was a most touching seal of the forgiveness which He had extended to His erring child, the mercy of which Jesus Christ's mission is the most impressive expression in all the history of the world. Solomon never could forget that his very existence and destiny were all associated with the grace of Jehovah. This had already been emphatically expressed in the name given to Solomon when he was born. The Lord called him Jedidiah, which means "the beloved," and we are told that the Lord loved him. Beautiful type of Him who is the

Son of His love and who comes to represent the mercy of God and stand for sinful men.

Again, Solomon was not the first born, but the second born of this union. The first had to die under the ban and doom of sin, but the second born lived as the child of grace. This is the very principle of the regenerate life. The first, natural, passes away. The second is the divine and eternal. The first man Adam, sinned, the second Adam, lives. The first natural generation perishes, the second birth, regeneration, brings us life and salvation. Solomon represented this, and thus the very germ and principle of the Gospel is embodied and impersonated in his life.

HIS NAME

Solomon's name means "peace," and he was the fitting type of the Prince of Peace. David's reign was associated with war and carnage and therefore he was not permitted to build the temple. Solomon was a man of peace and the chief glories of his administration were the triumph of peace, prosperity and progress. David, therefore, could not represent the millennial stage of Christ's kingdom, but rather the stage of conflicts that led up to it. Solomon stands for the age of glory when He shall have put down all authority and opposition,

and He shall reign over a realm of perfect love and peace. That age is surely coming. Battle flags will yet be furled, the groans of the wounded and dying will cease, earth's cemeteries shall be transformed into paradises and the curse of ages shall be turned into eternal blessing; not through human culture, not through the development of man's theories and the improvement of man's nature, but by the personal advent of the Prince of Peace of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end.

HIS CORONATION

The circumstances attending Solomon's coronation and the bitter hostility manifested toward him by his enemies and rivals was a striking foreshadowing of the opposition of men to the advent and reign of Christ. When He comes to reign He is not going to be accorded a public reception by the kings and nations and parliaments of earth. The second Psalm has given us a picture of Solomon's accession and Christ's coming. It was written, no doubt, with reference to both, but the temporal allusion soon passes into the higher fulfilment of the distant future. The heathen rage. The people imagine vanity. The kings of the earth are concerted against the Lord and His Christ.

The license of man is grinding its teeth against the control of His authority, and the proud, wilful human heart is crying out, "Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us. But He that sitteth in the heaven laughs," and by His sure decree and strong right arm "sets His King upon His holy hill of Zion," and "breaks in pieces as a potter's vessel" the nations that oppose Him, summoning them to "be wise," and "rejoice with trembling," and to "kiss the Son" in lowly submission before "His wrath be kindled but a little." This is the picture that we can see already developed out of the vortex of political confusion and contemporary history.

The nations are gradually and steadily withdrawing from the control of the Lord Jesus Christ. The concert of the powers which has begun is not to maintain His cause but to protect their little ambitions, aggrandizements and selfish interests, and already within a year the concert of Europe has condoned enough unspeakable wickedness against the very children of God and the martyrs of Jesus to bring down upon them God's eternal curse. The end is not going to be a peaceful Christian confederation of the world, but it is going to be Armageddon, the great day of conflict of earth's kings against the Lamb of God and the saints of Jesus. All

this was foreshadowed by Solomon's accession. Adonijah, his own brother, reared the standard of rebellion. Joab and Abiathar took his part and multitudes of the people were ready to join them, when by David's strong determination the opposition was suppressed and Solomon was set upon his throne. So it will be at the end, Adonijah representing the political powers, Joab representing the leaders and military forces, and Abiathar representing the corrupt Church. These are the combined forces that are to resist the coming of Christ and to be broken in pieces by the mighty hand of God, even as Daniel's stone cut out of the mountains smashed and scattered the image of earthly sovereignties and became the kingdom that filled the whole earth.

JUDGMENTS

The judgments which accompanied the inauguration of Solomon's reign were very striking and suggestive types of the events that are to accompany the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are many instances of men that had lived through the whole reign of David and their darkly dyed crimes had passed with impunity, but their retribution came with the accession of Solomon. One of these was Joab, who had often vexed the heart of David, whose judgment

was reserved until the accession of his son. But even Joab was not hastily punished by Solomon but was allowed to show his true character at the end, by joining the standard of Adonijah in open rebellion and thus bringing upon himself at last the deserved doom that David had so often foretold.

Another was Adonijah, who was pardoned for his first act of rebellion, but he was likewise to show a little later his true character by a more subtle conspiracy against the kingdom through Abishag the Shunamite, and this brought upon him also the fate that he had already merited.

Similar was the sentence of Abiathar, who was set aside from the high ecclesiastical place that he had falsely filled, and Zadok appointed in his stead.

The most striking of all these judgments was the death of Shimei, the miserable old churl who had openly cursed David in the hour of his tribulation and who had been magnanimously spared by the king and even granted a respite by Solomon at the beginning of his reign with a definite parole and understanding that if he should break it he should forfeit his life. Shimei was true to his parole for a short time, but he also presumed to despise his pledge of honor and brought upon his own head the

judgment that had been pronounced. Thus all these men passed away under the just and terrible retribution which in every case was brought upon their guilty heads by some rash act of their own. So it will be when the greater King shall come. Then how many secrets will be disclosed! How many lives will be made manifest! How many that have long tried the patience and longsuffering of God will be brought to strict account! How many, by some such test of character, will show that they were never really true and will stand revealed and confessed among His enemies and receive His condemnation and His judgment. Therefore, "let us judge nothing before the time until the Lord come who shall bring forth the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the heart," for the fire shall try every man's work.

HIS REIGN.

Solomon's reign was a type of Christ's millennial glory. His dominion was the most extensive and his throne the most magnificent the world had seen. All nations, it might truly be said, acknowledged his supremacy and came to pay court at his footstool. His riches were so immense that all the vessels of his court and palace were of gold, and silver was scarcely

counted of value in the streets of Jerusalem. He maintained a splendid court and table, a thousand wives, innumerable attendants and a vast army wholly occupied in providing for his household. His throne was of ivory and gold and his palace of cedar and marble took thirteen years in building and was a gem of magnificence and beauty. Thirty oxen and a hundred sheep were daily slaughtered to supply his own royal table. Forty thousand horses formed his stud. Vast aqueducts were built from the mountains to convey water to his pleasure grounds, and paradises and parks of incomparable beauty were constructed on his vast estates. A splendid palace was reared on the slopes of Lebanon, and as he traveled hither and thither he rode in a chariot of ivory, robed in spotless white, with splendid equipage and state, and great pillars of smoking incense preceded and followed his train, and as they saw him approach along the valleys of Samaria the watchmen on the towers of Lebanon cried, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke?" Vast forests were cut down and transported from Lebanon to the Persian Gulf and immense navies were built at Eziongeber at the head of the Indian Ocean, and after a three years' voyage the ships of commerce returned from India laden with gold,

silver, wood, peacocks, apes, rarest incense and spices, and all the treasures of the tropics, and the people of Jerusalem saw the caravans day by day entering their gates and bringing their vast treasures to enrich the king and his subjects.

In the early days of his reign the people shared in this splendid wealth and rejoiced in the sunshine of an extraordinary prosperity, dwelling, as we are told, under their vine and their fig tree in gladness of heart and cloudless prosperity. It was the golden age of Israel and the picture of the summer time of peace and benignity and blessedness which some day will dawn upon this distracted world.

HIS TEMPLE.

Solomon's reign was signalized by the building of the temple, and Christ's coming will be marked by the gathering of the Church, the completing of the Bride and the glorious consummation of the new Jerusalem, that edifice of living stones which Christ has been building through the ages and which some day will stand forth amid the admiring gaze of wondering worlds in all the ineffable glory of the vision of the Apocalypse, with the blended light of the jasper and the gold, the sapphire and the emerald, the amethyst and the pearl, the ruby

and the diamond, while the glory of God shall flash from His face and the likeness of the Lamb shall be reflected in His glorified and beloved Bride.

ISRAEL'S PRE-EMINENCE.

Solomon's reign was marked by the pre-eminence it gave to the Jewish nation. Israel was the queen of the earthly kingdoms and her supremacy was unchallenged. So it will be when He comes again. He shall restore the splendor of David's throne and the world shall acknowledge Israel as the chosen race. For this He is preparing her scattered sons today. For this He is giving them the language of the nations, the commercial ascendancy in the markets of the world, and even the literary control of journalism and the politics of nations. The time is coming soon when David shall sit upon His throne, and Israel shall sing once more in the heights of Zion. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee."

THE GENTILES.

The reign of Solomon was marked by a very wonderful influence among the Gentile nations. For once Israel out-reached her ancient limits and stretched out her hands to all the people

around. Her ships went to Tarshish and to India; the mighty Phœnician people in the north were her allies and her friends; Egypt, Assyria, Damascus, Hamar and Hiram of Tyre were in friendly alliance, and from the distant south the Queen of Sheba came, representing the myriad multitudes of the outlying world, to pay tribute at his feet. So it will be when Jesus comes again. Then shall the myriad people of earth become the subjects of His kingdom and come to pay their tribute at the footstool of His throne. This is not our expectation in this age. Our business is to bring Him to them through the message of the Gospel. His business will be to bring them to Him in the conversion of the world. Today we are gathering for Him a little sample from all earth's tribes and nations, a kind of first fruits of His kingdom, then He Himself shall claim the homage of all their millions and He shall reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

HIS BRIDE.

One of the most beautiful circumstances of Solomon's reign was his relation to one loving heart, to whom he seems to have given his supreme affection and who was singled out as the subject of an exquisite romance and the sweet-

est poem of affection that human language ever composed. It was the beautiful Shunamite of whom he wrote the song of love, the exquisite book of Canticles, and who seems to stand as the very type of the Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one for whom He has prepared His kingdom and with whom He is about to share His throne. We cannot enlarge upon this, but we know that Christ is gathering out a Bride for His name, and sweetly calling the hearts that are willing to hearken and obey, to understand His high calling and to know His love and to prepare for His coming. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider," he cries; "forget thy kindred and thy father's house. So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord, worship thou Him."

Oh, beloved, let us not miss this lesson. Has He offered us this high calling? Has He given us the secret of His heart, the invitation to the marriage of the Lamb? Let us not miss His calling. Let us not miss the slightest whisper of His love. Let us keep in closest touch with Him in these last days of time and be ready at a moment's warning to meet Him in the air.

GREATER THAN HIS THRONE.

Finally, the greatest fact in connection with

Solomon's reign was that Solomon himself was greater than all his pageantry of pomp and circumstances that surrounded him. The man was more than the king on the throne. It was not to see his splendor that the nations came, but to hear his wisdom and to come in contact with his personal worth. There are very few of whom this is true. Most persons are made up of their surroundings and their dress. Real beauty when unadorned is adorned the most, and when adorned it transcends its setting. This is supremely true of Jesus only. Greater than all the greatness that surrounds Him, He Himself is the "Chief among ten thousand," and altogether lovely! Oh, have we seen Him in His beauty? Do we know Him in His love? Are we longing for Him more than for all He is going to bring, and can we truly say with the old seraphic song,

"The bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear bridegroom's face.
I will not gaze on the glory,
But on the King of Grace;
Not on the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand.
The Lamb is all the glory
In Emmanuel's land."

